



# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. I

JULY, 1915

NO. 3

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## THINGS THAT MATTER

By SIR HUBERT PARRY

**T**HREE are an immense number of instances of works of art and literature which have had great vogue, and have been enthusiastically extolled for a while, but have soon vanished altogether into the limbo of things forgotten; except by the few whose duty it is to collect and certify illustrations of human fallibility. People commonly talk of such works as old-fashioned, and many think that explains everything. But as it is rather an unfriendly word it would be fairer to consider what it originally meant. Some people evidently regard the word as synonymous with 'old,' and 'old' as synonymous with 'superseded.' They seem to labour under the curious misconception that a thing is old-fashioned because the fashion for it is past; while in reality the meaning of the word was that the thing referred to had been fashioned long ago, and that the fashioning of it was after a manner that had been superseded or dropped in the general progress of arts and social habits. In its original sense the thing that was old-fashioned could be, on that account, loveable, romantic, suffused with a pretty savour of quaint ancientness. But in course of time the meaning of the word has grown specialized in an unfavourable direction; and this partly on account of its association with the word 'fashion.'

It was natural to think that the word 'old-fashioned' was derived from 'fashion'; but it is easy to see that the contrary was the fact, and that the latter word was derived from the former; and the slur which some people cast on a thing which is said to be 'old-fashioned' is owing to the attitude of mind which is engendered by much superfluous subservience to the standards of local and contemporary fashions. To such a type of mind

what is not in the fashion is not worthy of attention; and the advocacy of the extension of appreciation to such things as were fashioned in times of old is regarded as the mere stale, unprofitable babble of doddering dotards. It is a cheap way of ruling out things which seem likely to require a little effort of the intelligence to appreciate.

But even the most infatuated of the worshippers of fashion would not really rule things out because they were old, when brought to the actual test. In its depreciatory sense the word is not in the least synonymous with 'old.' The Acropolis is not old-fashioned, the Pyramids are not old-fashioned, Stonehenge is not old-fashioned, Palestrina's "*Missa Papae Marcelli*" is not old-fashioned, Bach's organ music is not old-fashioned, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Van Dyck are not old-fashioned, Shakespeare and Aristophanes are not old-fashioned; while on the other hand plenty of pictures which are shown with approval in exhibitions of the highest prestige are old-fashioned in the very next year. So it is clearly not on account of its age that a thing is old-fashioned.

But neither on the other hand could a thing be ruled as dead and done with on account of its not being in accordance with temporary fashion, but in reality rather the reverse. For one of the permanent jokes of those who laugh longest is, that the ideas of those who are in the forefront of fashion at any time are always the subjects of withering derision to those who represent the next fashion. It might fairly be argued that fashion shares this peculiarity with philosophies; but the discussion of the parallel would be disproportionate; it must be sufficient to point out that it would be very unsafe to take fashion as a touchstone of quality, when it is obvious that its most conspicuous characteristic is instability—in other words, that it hardly takes as much as a generation on an average to discover that its criteria are worthless.

The respect paid to fashion is mainly a survival. In days a little while ago, when those who patronized art and literature were few, people respected the tastes and opinions of those few who had a right to speak of culture as something honourable; and fashion in art matters and in literature really represented some little sense and enlightened discrimination. But when the wealthy classes ceased to take pride in knowing something about art, fashion ceased to have any consistency whatever and became the product of some three or four influences; such as imitation of and sympathy with the tastes (or absence of them) of immediate

neighbours, the arrogance of the half-witted type of plutocrats, and the astuteness of commercials. It was the interest of all concerned to avoid being long in the same opinion. Even the most abject mind could not put up with fashion if it was not perpetually changing. Fashion, moreover, does not want things that last. If they last too well they last till they are out of fashion and then discredit its devotees. Fashion is a crude manner of marshalling the hosts of those who do not want the trouble of thinking for themselves. It is a sort of safeguard to those who are incapable of going along alone. It is implied of necessity that its devotees are deficient in mental outfit; and only survive by perpetual change of their ground.

But the essence of art on the other hand is permanence; by which is meant that it survives the close scrutiny of all the best minds for generations. The products which represent fashion do not survive scrutiny. Take for instance any inadequate work about which the general public is lured into wild ecstasy by clever advertisement. At first it is swept whole-heartedly into the vortex; but after a while some few begin to discern inadequacies, even the shuffling workman's faulty work, and the flaws become irritating; and when men know that every time they submit to the spell of the work again they will have to experience the same feeling of nausea from dishonest pretence in it they necessarily draw away from it, and very soon indeed they will have to confess that the thing is indeed old-fashioned in the bad sense. But the work that is really sound is welcomed by the sternest critics for generations; and if flaws are found and condoned it is because they are honourable flaws; the flaws of the creature really trying to do his best with such means as are at his disposal, and not trying to pass off impostures as compromises made to please or hoax the ignorant.

It would be gratifying to be able to say that fashion is a thing which does not matter, but unfortunately it would not be true. Its influence is unavoidable. There are hardly any men strong enough to be able to disregard it, and those who try to do so and write in accordance with patiently earned convictions are likely themselves to be disregarded. As things are, fashion colours everything that attracts public attention, and it accordingly takes a very large share in determining the qualities which characterize the art of any time or generation. This implies that fashion is not purely fortuitous. In the present day those who organize fashions, whether for commercial or for other purposes, study their public with great astuteness. They are not so foolish as to try

to drive them in a direction they do not want to go. They prepare the ground step by step and each new departure leads naturally to another, just as the discomforts of the notorious hobble skirt which confined female legs led to the split skirt which exposed them sometimes surprisingly. The laughable thing is that the public does not know where it is being led, and thinks it is its own genius which is finding out the new things. And so subservience takes the appearance of spontaneity—and the fact remains that each change of fashion does in a way represent the mental outfit or temperamental average of the time. And in that sense it matters. It matters especially as a thing against which every independent personality has ceaselessly to strive.

But it must obviously be a very superficial part of art which is so chameleon-like in its vagaries. The things that are vital take ages to change. It is indeed only the surface which changes, and in these fashions, whether of art or literature, the reasons are not difficult to find. It is characteristic of undeveloped minds to worship accessories. Lack of vitality of brain shows itself especially in the incapacity to discern the true meaning of things, and to be seduced by the trappings, the adornments, the bedizened outsides of things. To unalert minds it is inevitable to mistake attitudinizing for heroism, bluster for bravery, rouge and powder for beauty, and the glib outpourings of big words for oratory. They are so dazzled by the external show that they have not any attention left to discover if there is anything behind it. Hence fashion in arts mainly concerns itself with phraseology; and it is mainly by phraseology that one period differs from another, and it is in phraseology especially that a thing becomes 'old-fashioned.'

Yet phraseology in music as in literature is a matter of great importance. It can be manipulated for various purposes. It may be concentrated with superb skill to convey interesting thoughts and speculations. It can be used for decorative purposes to give æsthetic interest, or the impression of skill in the performer. It can also be used so as to conceal the absence of any thought worth considering, and it can be made up of popular catch phrases to tickle the ears of the groundlings. The two latter kinds do not need consideration here, but the two first often seem to run contrary to one another, so it is desirable to have a clear idea of their respective spheres. In connection with the first the ideal of the most perfect style comes to mind; that it is the employment of the fewest terms musical or otherwise which will convey the meaning most completely under the conditions of presentment. Such an ideal of style of course appeals only to highly organized

minds. It is based on the far-off consciousness that life is short and there is a great deal to do in it, and that therefore the man who can express what he has to express as concisely and decisively as possible is a benefactor of his species. And there is yet another allurement about it, that it invites exercise of the mind in those that wish to understand, and gives a pleasant feeling of exhilaration to those who feel they have grasped a full meaning, with all its copious implied side allusions, and subtle hints at far distant coherences.

But this desirable aspect of style seems altogether countered by the decorative impulse. The decorative part of art is indeed necessarily on the surface and easily influenced by fashion and temporary whims. But it covers an enormous deal of ground in art, and might even be described by superficial observers as the ultimate object of it. Yet when the object is to convince it is for the most part obstructive. It keeps people waiting. But then on the other hand it may keep people waiting willingly. Where the object is to dwell upon something beautiful, touching, mysterious and moving, and not hurry on, as in an argument, the decorative element has an ample excuse.

Two types of mind come into consideration. The man who wants to reason out a thing to its conclusions and is not concerned with its beauty resents the decorative element which hampers its progress and often distracts him. The mind which is more susceptible to beauty wants to linger over it, and see the beauty enhanced by appropriate adornment. Both attitudes are perfectly legitimate, but the latter needs the most qualification.

There have been various types of composers who may be described as decorative, and some of the greatest of them were also great masters of conciseness of style when the occasion called for it. And it is to be observed also that some of the most intense and spiritual of all forms of art have been mainly based on decorative procedure, as that most enchanting form of art, the Choral Prelude, of which Buxtehude and J. S. Bach and a few latter-day German composers have produced such moving examples. But therein lies the cue to the thing which matters in decorative treatment, that it serves to enhance the meaning and the beauty of the matter in hand. In this connection a fact worth observing which seems to run counter to preconceived opinions is that J. S. Bach was most decorative when he had something peculiarly poignant, pathetic, humanly moving to express—as in both the final passages of the scene of Peter's denial in the St. John and the St. Matthew Passions, and in the Agnus Dei in the B minor Mass, the pathetic slow movement of the Italian

Concerto, the Prelude in E $\flat$  minor in the first book of the Wohltemperirtes Klavier, in the most deeply felt of all the Chorale Preludes, "O Mensch bewein'"; in the great G minor Prelude for Organ, and countless specially sad passages in Recitatives and Arioso. The spontaneous feeling of humanity would probably be that in times of sadness and sorrow the indulgence in decoration would be inappropriate. But this corrective in the spontaneous practice of one of the most just-minded of composers is enforced by a very wide range of fact. It is notorious that lamentations and songs of bewailing in folk music and savage music are full of decorative passages—sometimes they seem almost made up of them. And turning to more modern examples, the most pathetic and poetical of all Chopin's Etudes, that in C $\sharp$  minor in Opus 25, is a perfect rhapsody of decoration. Instances might be multiplied ad infinitum. The suspicion grows that decorative procedures are more apt to times of mourning than ordinary times, and that, what is stranger still, men of sense are more apt to resent them as superfluous at ordinary times than at melancholy times. And this leads to the confirmation of what has been said above that decorative treatment is mainly appropriate when something has to be dwelt upon, and contemplated at length; and it follows that in such a case the type of decoration must be such as is consistent in style and expression with the central mood, for if it were not it would diminish the effect instead of enhancing it.

The German composers just before and about Bach's time developed a specially expressive type of decorative passages which are very characteristic of the race. Keiser affords some examples in his sacred music, and so does Handel in his earliest compositions; and Bach's examples, above alluded to, belong to the same expressive type, which thoroughly justifies itself. On the other hand there is the type which does not ultimately justify itself, in which the decoration is hardly more than passage-writing for the purpose of vocal display. The worst kind of such decoration is afforded in the horrible inanity of what is called "coloratura" in Italian operas from almost the earliest days till the first half of the nineteenth century. Such decorative adjuncts have generally no meaning at all, and were introduced for no other purpose than to show off the vocal vanity of the singers. Some of the worst and most aggressive are in Meyerbeer's operas. They were aggressive because people about his time were waking up to the futility of such decorations. In modern times the sense of appositeness has so developed that such a thing only occurs in quite irresponsible music; and as the vocal part of musical

dramas approximates more and more to musically defined elocution the decorative features become more and more rare.

But meanwhile decorative treatment has become inevitable for other reasons than the enhancement of ideas. It is one of the familiar paradoxes of life that it was rendered inevitable on grounds of style in harpsichord music and in pianoforte music, because of their extremely limited power of sustaining tone. The result of this absolute disability was the development of the principle of presenting the ideas and indeed most of the musical material in rapid passages which represented either the harmonies or the essential notes of melody in decorative terms. This branch of art went through the usual phases; beginning with conventional formulas of arpeggios, and gradually became more and more characteristic and appropriate as composers found out how to manipulate the passages. Beethoven by degrees evolved a splendid standard of such treatment, as for instance in the last movement of the Sonata in C minor, Opus 111. And thenceforward pianoforte composers applied themselves more and more to the fashioning of decorative passages which aptly express the sentiment or feeling of what is in hand. The greater part of Chopin's music is expressed in terms of decoration, of the very subtlest kind. No composer ever excelled him in this respect. Such familiar works as the first and last parts of the Impromptu in A flat, the same portions of the Fantasia Impromptu in C sharp minor and the Study in F minor in Opus 25 are entirely devoid of long notes of any kind; and such treatment of the instrument is an ideal solution of the problem of style, and at the same time produces a dazzling effect, because of the rapid flitting by of notes which are extraneous to the harmony.

Chopin emphasizes the point of the necessity of the decorative features being interesting and appropriate in themselves. The reason why the old kind of theme and variations was so generally detested was that the decorative features were purely perfunctory. They were put there merely for show, and added nothing of interest to their foundation or theme. Bach made his one great exception to the common run of such works in his Goldberg Variations; setting them aside, the progress of the understanding of decorative treatment is nowhere more vindicated than in the restoration of the variation form in favour in Beethoven, Brahms, Dvorak, Tschaikowsky and other recent composers; the meaning of it being that each variation becomes a new presentation of the theme, frequently on a distinct decorative scheme which has its individual character and its inevitable individual principles of

coherence. The point evidently is that the decorative element in art tends more and more to have its own unmistakable meaning. Where the sense of falseness comes in is where the decorative material is merely used for display; to show off the technical efficiency of the performer. Such kind of foolishness soon reveals its purpose. It has its inevitable success for a time and then all really musical people are glad to be rid of it. Musical people want to feel that the things to whose spell they submit themselves are intelligible; and intelligible in an honourable fashion. If they are only explicable as being put in for show, people who really want music see that the purpose is not a profitable one, and decline to give their attention further.

But there is yet another inevitable cause of decorative treatment, and that is to provide for texture in works which have to be played by many instruments. The reason why the violin style has developed into such flexibility and vivacity of decorative qualities is probably that it is essentially a melodic instrument, and in trying to represent harmony with it composers found themselves hampered by the obviousness of mere arpeggio formulas, and had to seek for ways of sophistication by the addition of inessential notes in order to induce sufficient definition and character. The same tendency is ultimately observable in all melodic instruments, that is to say in all the instruments constituting the modern orchestra; only they have progressed more slowly because they were not by nature so agile as the violin. The progress of orchestration was parallel to this development. At first, as every one knows, it was content with the basic essential notes, varied with conventional formulas; but as composers' technique and the technique of performers increased, every individual instrument established claims on the composer. He had to find the passages that were apt to them to play as well as effective to play—and so by degrees the texture of an orchestral score became more and more alive in every part; no longer consisting of holding notes for some instruments and active passages for others, but each according to its ability, and the composer's, presenting their share in the special decorative fashion which is intelligible in relation to the activities of the others. Decorative treatment in such a case is the result of the necessity for avoiding mere bald statement on the one hand, and meaningless conventions on the other. The impulse is inevitable, and the thing that matters is that it shall mean something.

But the significance of decorative treatment is quite different in choral and instrumental music. In the latter it proves to be

inevitable, but in a sense different from that in vocal music. Special solo voices become apt to decorative purposes through special training in that direction. By nature there is comparatively little need for the decorative element even in solo music, as may be observed in the tendencies of modern song; and, as has been observed before, in modern music drama. But choral music is even less apt for decorative purposes. Decoration is very nearly non-existent in the madrigals and church music of the purest Elizabethan type. Voices are not naturally agile enough to invite it. And consequently there follow some very decisive differences between instrumental and choral style which are not confined to mere decorative conditions.

In the earlier phases of art which were founded entirely on the conditions of choral music, voices being inapt for rapid passages, interest and vivacity of texture was provided by simple, melodious passages of counterpoint, which adequately exercised the voices. When instruments came to be used which were not bound by the limitations of music for voices, and could take and play any notes that were required of them, however acute the resulting discordance, and also easily perform passages of rapidity and character which would have been impossible for voices, composers had to project their minds into the attitude of thinking in instrumental terms instead of vocal terms. But habits and methods were too strong for them; and it is a strange fact that, though centuries have passed since music began to be performed mainly by instruments, men still cling to the idea, in theory, that what is suitable for voices is suitable for instruments, and continue to teach aspiring young composers to write instrumental compositions as if the limitations of vocal music still applied to them. As a matter of fact the whole basis of music was so deeply rooted in choral conceptions that it required a total change of attitude and even of reason of existence when instruments were employed instead of voices; and the latest instrumental art of the present day, which so completely bewilders and distresses the musicians who have been thoroughly saturated with the traditions of vocal art, is merely a frank negation of the necessity of applying the principles of choral music to instrumental music, and a determination to find the unalloyed principles of instrumental music.

In order to make this clear it is necessary to take a concise survey of one of the principal conceptions of a musical work which is intended to be performed by voices. Every musical work must start from a definite, intelligible point, and maintain a sense of necessary motion or impulse thenceforward from point to point

till the circuit, small or great, has been completed and return is made to the initial point again. It has to have something which pushes it on from moment to moment throughout. This was provided for in the most active sense by the introduction of discords, which may be called the energizing factors because they necessitate further motion in resolution. And the sense of inevitable motion can be maintained by the discord being resolved on some combination of sounds which is in unstable relation with the centre from which the composition set out; wherefrom the mind could realize that though the tension was relieved the relief was only relative and required further steps before the complete relief was afforded by its finding itself happily confronted by the centre from which it had set out.

But the process was mainly dependent on the physical difficulty of voices taking notes which were in discordant relation with other notes. This was the obvious basis of the rule, so characteristic of choral and vocal music, that discordant notes must be prepared. In the days when an infinite variety of discords had not become familiar experiences, voices could only sing discords by taking the notes which were to be discordant first as concordant notes and holding them while the other voices moved melodically and made them discordant. And this procedure induced the sense of necessary movement. The gradual abandonment, step by step, of the practice of preparing a discord came from the fact that instruments could take any note in relation to any other. Even in the days when choral music still predominated such mild discords as dominant sevenths were allowed to dispense with preparation; and some even less mild discords, such as ninths and derivatives of ninths and discords which were explained as appoggiaturas were by degrees excused this ancient formality. Preparations in such cases were dispensed with because singers could find the exact pitch of the notes with security. Their growing knowledge of a wider range of chords enabled them to dispense with preliminary.

But as people did not understand the real origin of the process of preparation, and also because it was a characteristic feature of the finest kind of art then known, they still maintained that every properly conducted composer should still prepare his discords, like a good little boy at school. It is like the exasperating and familiar argument that, if a thing has been good enough for a man's parents, it ought to be good enough for him. To the awakening mind the maintenance of such a theory as the preparation of discords seems like an illustration of the

persistence of a tradition which is not germane to the facts of the situation.

But there are much deeper things involved. The whole texture of the art of music was so permeated with and so dependent upon the methods of choral art that it needed complete transformation of its whole essence and principles. But they had in their turn to be found out. Just as after a revolution men revert to the forms and details of administration which were in existence before it for lack of schemes and principles more apt to a new constitution of things; so in the slow and peaceful revolution from choral music to instrumental music men went on thinking they must lay stress on the rules and customs of the earlier art, though as a matter of fact they were no longer apposite.

But a very potent consideration was also that art was permeated through and through by special kinds of dexterity and device, which were signs and tokens of a noble artistic scheme. One of the subtlest and most ineradicable of these was that the old choral counterpoint was all developed on the basis of what was enjoyable for a human creature to sing. The most delightful choral music is that which all the singers can rejoice in as they sing. That is such choral music as recognizes the humanity as well as the vocal limitations of the performers. The composers whose works were described as "Apt for Voices and Viols" had no notion whatever of what even viols could do. The scope of instruments was so infinitely wider than that of voices that what was enjoyable to the instrumentalist to play was necessarily a totally different thing from what would rouse the zeal of the singer. The instrumentalist would by no means be excited about playing vocal parts. They would seem tame to him because they did not make sufficient or even suitable calls upon his abilities. Yet composers who are still trained in the ancient love of choral music, still address themselves to thinking the instrumental parts of their scores on the same terms as if they were voices. They still try to make them humanly interesting from a vocal rather than a positively instrumental point of view. And it is a pathetic fact that the composers who do so are far finer characters, and their music is of deeper quality than that of those who have thrown all the time-honoured anomalies to the winds. The old practices are associated with thoughts to which men can bow their heads in pure sincerity, and it is difficult to keep such influences at bay when they have taken possession. Whereas the new methods are associated with the humours of the street, and the man who has lived the life contemplative, or indeed genuinely

intelligent, finds difficulty in turning somersaults and cartwheels in public with the merry urchins.

So it has come about that instrumental music continued to be saturated with the methods and appliances of choral music, till near the end of the nineteenth century. It was then, in the universal repudiation, which applied to painting art, sculpture, decorative art, and even social conditions, as well as music, in most countries which were at all progressive, that some composers really faced the facts. Their comprehensive abandonment of all the familiar standards of art at this time included the traditional cogency of such simple procedures as preparing and resolving discords. Composers realized that instruments could play any notes they were asked to play and that the very wildest of sensational discords were quite easy to them, and even the simultaneous performance of passages and progressions of chords in several different keys at once. So the ears of the experts were assailed, and the groundlings seemed to triumph. Undoubtedly the groundlings were delighted with the new sensations with which music could provide them, and not a few composers devoted what skill they had to the devising of the most excruciating combinations of notes. The moment was opportune, and even sensitive experts could find vast entertainment in such amusing experiences. They had no need to be distressed at the strange ebullitions, for the really musical expert can see through the apparently confused tangle. The groundlings and their flatterers have no doubt lost sight of the fact that all art is an adjustment of relations; and this the expert will deplore; but if he can see far enough he will remember that all progress entails some sacrifices, and that it is better to give up a few comforts than to relapse into lethargy and lifelessness. The mere claim of the abolition of laws must inevitably lead to unusual proceedings. Such proceedings are unlikely to have any reasonable or intelligent basis, and are always quite unsystematic at first. But they get sorted and systematized and put in their proper places as time goes on. The things that are merely wild and extravagant disappear, and the strokes that really have some meaning are assimilated into the body of art.

But a revolution always takes time to settle, and until the new paths are more clearly defined there must be at least two types of composers. There are those on the one hand who must be attracted by the old methods because they afford them so much scope and are associated in their minds with all that is noblest and purest in their art, which is still intelligible on the

old terms; while on the other hand there must be adventurers who love to show their daring and disdain of things they believe to be inapt and old-fashioned; and show such disdain principally in splashes and spasms, and revert elsewhere to the makeshifts of those who are utterly uninitiated in the mysteries of artistic method and meaning. The way out lies through the slow and difficult progress of developing consistency in style. Which is another way of describing intelligible relations. When examples of aggressively up-to-date procedure are presented in connection with archaic conventions which date from far remote periods of art the most unsophisticated hearer soon perceives there is something awry. The style is fatally inconsistent because the relations of parts to one another are unintelligible. The ultimate test of everything is merely whether it is intelligible or not.

Yet things may appear absurd for a time because of the limitations of those whose minds are not sufficiently trained to find the clue. An illustration may be afforded through the extraordinary revelation in recent times of possible relations between harmonies which appear to be almost at the extremes of remoteness in tonality. It must be pointed out that art illustrates the fact of its being a counterpart of the mind most significantly in always seeking to expand the range of its sense of relations; and successive generations of composers have aimed at such expansion because the more things can be made intelligible through their relations the greater the scope and the greater the interest both of expression and structure. In the Sonata period composers and audiences were quite satisfied with Tonic and Dominant chords and a few well-defined subordinates. They had not yet found out how to make a vast number of chromatic harmonies intelligible. J. S. Bach had found out some things worth knowing, but the Sonata composers were not concerned with him. And there are reasons which it would take too long to explain which gave him an advantage. But when Beethoven in his later years had indicated the path, composers soon began to find out how to make the use of a vast array of additional harmonies, and thereby enormously enhanced the interest as well as the range of immediate expression.

The process by which such things are made intelligible is by linking harmonies which appear remote from one another through progressions of other harmonies which have intelligible relations with both of them. As an instance may be taken the linking of such harmonies as those of F $\sharp$  and C, which to a musician of the Sonata period would seem almost unthinkable. But if a modern composer wants to get to the chord of C from the chord of F $\sharp$  he

finds it quite easy to go from F $\sharp$  to the chord of B minor; and then taking the root note B as a pivot note he can easily convert it into the third of G, the Dominant Chord of C, to which he might, if so minded, add the minor 7th of that chord in order decisively to obliterate the most essential note of the chord F $\sharp$ , and then proceed with assurance of being understood to C. Of course there are dozens of other ways in which it might be done which an astute composer would choose from motives of design or expression. The main point is that the connection between F $\sharp$  and C should be made intelligible. And by like processes every chromatic chord in the whole range is capable of being netted into the circumference of the tonality of C, or relatively any other central keynote. But a musician of the Sonata period whose understanding was limited to Tonic and Dominant and a few trifling accessories might be entirely bewildered by the appearance of such extraneous chords; more especially as every kind of artist and litterateur at times thinks it admissible (in a fit of conciseness) to drop out the obvious term, because he thinks it is no use explaining what everybody may be expected to know. Then the poor scion of limited Sonata experience would indeed be lost. If for instance a modern composer dropped the chord of B minor in the progression described above, and went straight from the chord of F $\sharp$  to the last inversion of the minor seventh on G, the man who had not experienced the full logical progression would feel as if the world of his art were whirling off into space.

The outcry which has so often greeted new departures in musical art is always the protest of those who do not understand. Sometimes they have been quite right. There is nothing to understand. Oftentimes they have been wrong; and not infrequently they have been half and half. The progression which is new might be intelligible but quite out of gear with its context. In other words it would in that case produce objectionable inconsistency in style. Inconsistency is incoherent. Incoherence is unintelligible. What is unintelligible is only fit for the rubbish heap.

In this connection there comes in one of the subtlest and most difficult of questions, which has been specially discussed in connection with architecture. When a man sees battlements on the walls of an ancient building which was liable to be besieged he knows what they were there for. But when he sees them on the top of a semi-suburban villa he does not think very highly of the architect or builder who put them there. The possible banker's clerk who lives in the semi-suburban villa would justify them on the grounds of association—that they suggested the sort of

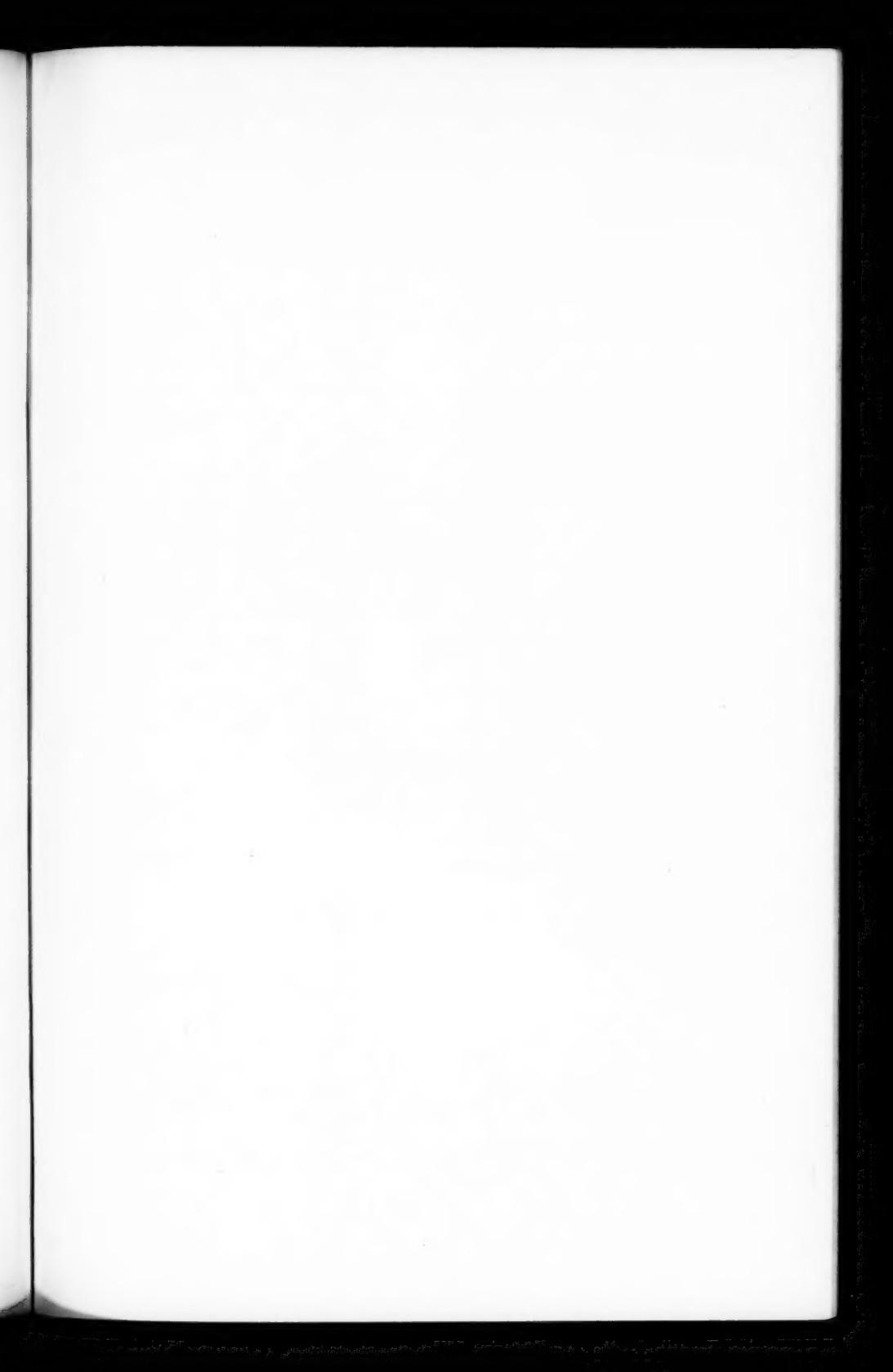
buildings which roused his romantic or pugnacious instincts. The question becomes urgent. For even as in architecture every feature whatever was invented or devised to meet some special structural need or climatic condition, so in musical art every note of the scale and almost every chord and progression was found out by composers to supply some special purpose, to answer some need that they felt imperative. But to the man who comes to such things without any experience or knowledge of what each thing meant in the first instance, it seems as if everything was a blank, meaningless counter that he could put anywhere he liked so long as the effect was nice. The results often illustrate the difference between genuine knowledge and the lack of it; such as people often experience when they hear a totally illiterate person make a speech or a sermon with intention to impress the hearers by fine and lofty language.

But in real honesty it must be admitted that a thing which is invented for one purpose is not absolutely precluded from being used for another. The whole question again is whether the new use proves itself intelligible and whether the new use serves to better or to deteriorate the human beings that experience it; and whether the new use is in due proportion to the other features and factors. It becomes apparent that the motive or spirit in which any particular artistic procedure or action is taken affects the feeling of the intelligent auditor. Vulgarity is mainly a specially offensive form of stupidity which invites people to fall down and worship things which are obviously base, false, pretentious and empty. Most of the misapplications of architectural features, like the battlements on suburban villas, suggest that designation. But it is the pretentious impulse that decides it. If an innocent child put battlements to its garden shed the question of vulgarity might be shelved.

In the same category comes the colossal outpouring of popular music for the masses which entirely ignores the original purposes and meanings of things. It all belongs to the same order as the artistic furniture standardized and supplied wholesale by commercial houses, who not only pay journeymen to put the stuff together, but also manipulate the taste of the ignorant to make them eager for their wares, exactly as the dressmakers, tailors and hatters arrange the fashions. In such things there is no meaning, and no purpose. It is mere stringing together of letters that have no spirit, and never has any life at all. However, one must admit frankly that there are commercials of genius, and that when they combine with the fashion-makers to direct public attention to

certain special ingenuities and novelties of procedure very interesting and valuable results may be attained. But there is an inevitable stain on such work. It leaves an unclean taste in the mouth. Men who understand watch the products with pitiful interest. They can see in the actual work produced the inner life of the human types that produced and take pleasure in the result. When the man of genius prostitutes his gifts to ignoble uses, be he ever so slim, out of the number of people who will observe his work some have the instinct of sincerity. And yet some one may illustrate what has been said above about applying things that were invented for one purpose to a different and more profitable one! And art will thereby be a gainer.

The fact that counts is that art is always growing by so much vitality as the really productive artists can put into it. The really productive artist does not only contrive the expression of himself. He builds up more art. The increment is the proof of real life—we must admit that it sometimes happens that it is among things we feel inclined to reprobate that we find the factors of expansion. But the music of the inner life cannot discriminate before the event. It has to accept and discriminate afterwards—and the important thing is that people should by degrees approximate to being able to distinguish between what will serve for honourable ends and what merely appeals to the lower instincts. Art either refines and enlarges man's inner being or feeds the stupid animal in him. If it does the former it is to his advantage, if the latter it is not. The comforting fact, about which there is no mistake, is that in the long run it is the former kind of art which survives.



西御之詩

三上行/電



A DANCER ENACTING SAIGO'S POEM  
Specially drawn for this article by KAZUO MURASE

## THE CLASSIC DANCE OF JAPAN

By NATALIE CURTIS

PATRIOTISM, loyalty, courage, the stoic virtues of Japan, and even the suicidal act of *hara-kiri* find graphic expression in a form of art comparatively little known to the Western world: the classic dance, an art as dignified as oratory, which forms part of the accomplishment of Japanese youth and belongs to the culture of the nation.

"The classic dance is noble" say the Japanese, and indeed it is frequently performed by young men of rank. "We call the classic dances 'sword-dances' because of their heroic themes. The dancer illustrates through action a poem which is sung or declaimed at one side by a musician. These poems belong to the best literature of Japan. Our students often sing them when walking alone in their gardens of a moonlight night."

Such poems are usually composed in what is known in Japanese literature as the "Chinese form." As Japan to-day is absorbing western civilization, so with the same zeal did she in the past absorb the civilization of China, even adopting the Chinese written characters as the basis of her script. Thus, there are forms in Japanese literature directly derived from the Chinese, and a knowledge of the Chinese language was until recently a background in Japanese culture, even as that of Greek and Latin is in our own.

The so-called Chinese form of verse consists of four columns of Chinese characters with seven characters in each column; but though the script is Chinese, the language is of course Japanese. Part of the beauty of these poems is the form, unfortunately lost in a translation which can only give with approximate symmetry the meaning of the words. However, the two poems quoted in this article, the old and classic poem of Michezane, dating from the ninth century, and the modern verse of Saigo, written in 1869, are here given in the original Japanese language inscribed in European characters as well as in Chinese, so that the reader may see and feel their rhythmic beauty; for the Chinese form is as clearly defined in Japanese literature as is the sonnet form in our own. These poems reflect one of the Japanese ideals in poetry: to express in the fewest possible words a single beautiful thought.

In declaiming or chanting the poem for the Classic Dance a musical intonation is used, a western analogy to which might

perhaps be approximated by the *recitative* of Italian opera or the free musical declamation of Wagner, with the difference that in the Japanese recitative the same musical outline is used for many different poems and for every poem in the Chinese form, and is sung without accompaniment. The idea of a definite, though flexible melody, free in rhythm, for the intoning of poetry corresponds more nearly to the conception of the medieval plain-song of the Roman church and to the chanting of many different verses of a psalm to the same musical phrase.

The classic dance, like the classic drama, of Japan, is wholly symbolic. It is suggestive rather than realistic. Some of the popular dances are more in the character of many of our own stage-dances—moving lines of color with hardly a greater purpose than to please the eye. But the classic dance, with its union of musical declamation, lofty poetry and symbolic action, is a form of art that appeals to the highest intellectuality and to the deepest emotion. Each dance lasts but a few moments, yet it seems a complete drama. As in Japanese painting a few sure sweeps of the brush may awaken a train of suggested imagery, so in the classic dance a phrase of chanted poetry and the rhythmic movement of swift gestures stir the imagination in response to the poet's vision of valor and patriotism.

The sword-dances are not confined to the aristocracy and to students; they may also be performed in the theatres by professional dancers, geisha girls clad in the warrior costume of old Japan. One of these dances given publicly evokes the greatest enthusiasm as it portrays through the combat of two dancers and through the poem declaimed at the side the conflict between Japan and Russia and the victory for Dai Nippon. This poem is of course modern.

An older and very famous verse forms the basis of one of the best known sword dances, and has for its theme the cardinal virtue of Japan—loyalty to the Mikado, "the Son of Heaven." The poem is by Sugawara Michezane, a famous scholar and statesman of the ninth century, whom Japan has deified as god of calligraphy, consecrating the twenty-fifth day of the month to the memory of the great author whose written works comprise no less than two hundred volumes of history and some twelve volumes of poetry. The tribulations and the loyalty of Michezane form the theme of several Japanese dramas, the most famous of which is the "Sugawara Senju Tanarai Kagami," written by Takeda Izumo in 1746. Thus the figure of the great calligraphist has been kept vividly before the mind of Japan, while Lafcadio Hearn has made

known to the western world one of the beautiful and poetic legends that cluster around the memory of Michizane.

A tutor at Kioto, and later the governor of Sanuki, the great scholar was at one time dearly loved by his emperor, Daigo Tenno, who made him minister. But powerful nobles, the Fujiwara, whose hatred Michezane incurred, intrigued against him, till the Emperor, incensed, condemned his former favorite to banishment at Kiu Shiu, a lonely island. But Michezane in his exile, even though sentenced to unjust punishment, thought only with reverent, passionate and tender longing of his Emperor. Daily, in loyal homage, he lifted to his brow the gift of the Mikado, an embroidered Chinese robe, the fragrance of whose perfumed folds brought vividly before him the memory of his sovereign. Thus consecrated ever to his master, he wrote the poem famous throughout the centuries, which forms the subject of one of the dances. A virtue of Japanese poetry is to impress through the effect of contrast, and thus the profound feeling underlying this verse of Michezane is created by the very delicacy of that subtlest thing—a haunting perfume, so potent to recall a vanished presence. The word “autumn,” often found in Japanese poetry, is a symbol of melancholy.

### MICHEZANE'S POEM

去年今夜待清涼  
愁思詩篇獨斷腸  
恩賜御衣猶茲在  
持每拜餘香  
菅原道寧作

### TRANSLITERATION OF MICHEZANE'S POEM

(Vowels are given the continental sound)

1<sup>st</sup> column: Kyo nen no konya Sei Ryo ni jishi

2<sup>nd</sup> column: Shū shi no shihen hitori dan cho.

3<sup>rd</sup> column: Onshi no gyoii nawo kokoni ari

4<sup>th</sup> column: Hoji shite mayenichi yokō wo haisu

(The Chinese characters are read downward, from right to left.)

**MICHEZANE'S POEM**  
 (TRANSLATION)

(Each verse of this translation represents a column of Chinese characters.)

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>1st column:</i> | A year ago,<br>A year ago to-night<br>In Sei Ryo I served my Emperor.            |
| <i>2nd column:</i> | Verses we speake<br>Of autumn thought—<br>Now am I heartbroken<br>And alone.     |
| <i>3rd column:</i> | Only the honored robe,<br>His honored gift<br>Is with me yet.                    |
| <i>4th column:</i> | Uplifting this<br>Now day by day<br>The lingering scent<br>I reverently breathe. |

In the classic dance the poem is of course sung at one side, while the dancer suggests through pose and action the sentiment of the verse, which appeals to the loftiest ideals of Japanese character.

Another famous dance accompanies a more modern poem by Japan's great General Saigo (pronounced Sygo), who was the first to introduce into Japan the European method of warfare. Saigo's military genius conceived a plan to capture Korea, but the Emperor rejected this advice. The general therefore resigned his position at court and retired to his country seat, where he drew about him a number of military students, to whom he taught the modern art of war.

The Emperor suspected Saigo of a plot to capture Korea in spite of the government and sent spies to investigate. Saigo's students killed the spies without the master's knowledge and the general, himself guiltless of this offence, set out for Tokio to give an explanation to the government. On his way he was met by the Emperor's troops, surprised, surrounded and overcome. Saigo cut his way through the siege and escaped to his home. But his flight was not for life, it was for death, honorable death by his own hand in sight of his native mountain, the vindicating death of *hara-kiri*, which reveals the purity of a man's soul and the honor of his purpose.

Saigo was a true Samurai, and to-day the western world knows the meaning of the "Samurai spirit," which was said to have animated all Japan in the war with Russia. For the Samurai—in feudal times a class corresponding to the English gentry,

ranking between nobility and the people—were the loyal fighting men of greater lords, loyal unto death when only death, which in their stoic courage they held in contempt, could show their true allegiance. As in the western world a man proved his honor through the duel, so in Japan he justified himself by taking his own life. To die for the Emperor, or on the Emperor's demise to follow him, was true loyalty and highest virtue. Yet these stern warriors, of whom the ancient law proclaimed "A Samurai may not die in bed of peace," held poetry so high that they were depicted with sword in one hand and pen in the other; for poetry is the fluent and spontaneous utterance of Japan, and in the recent Russo-Japanese war, the generals frequently sent their war-despatches in verse. Japanese poetry does not rhyme like ours, but is governed by laws of form. The making of verses, contests and games of verse, are a pastime of the common people; even the chop-sticks are graced with little poems. Thus Saigo, before committing suicide to prove his loyalty, his honor and his devotion, penned a poem; and in the classic dance it is this death-poem that is sung while the dancer portrays the desperate sortie through the enemy and the final act of *hara-kiri*.

Reading downward, from right to left, the fifth column inscribes "Saigo's Poem," and the date, corresponding to 1869 of our calendar.

#### TRANSLITERATION

(Vowels are given the continental sound)

1st column: Kogun funto kakomi wo yabutte kairu

2nd column: Ipyaku no ritei ruiheki no kwan

3rd column: Waga ken wa sudeni ore waga uma wa

4th column: Taworu shūfū hone wo uzumu kokyo no yama

(The very descriptive word "shūfū" means "Autumn-wind.")

#### SAIGO'S POEM

SAIGO'S POEM  
(TRANSLATION)

- 1st column:* The few men left to me  
Fought with their might:  
Now through the siege  
Hewed I a path
- 2nd column:* Forth from my stronghold  
An hundred leagues  
To the home of my fathers  
Fighting my way.
- 3rd column:* My sword is broken,  
My horse is fallen.
- 4th column:* O wind of Autumn!  
Here will I lay my bones  
'Mid the bones of my fathers  
Beholding the Mountain,  
The place of my birth.

THE MUSIC FOR SAIGO'S POEM

The musical score consists of four staves of music in common time, treble clef, and a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are written in a phonetic transcription of Japanese, corresponding to the poem above. The lyrics are as follows:

Kogun fun - to ka-ko-mi wo ya-but-te kai-ru —  
 ip - ya-ku no — ri tel — rui-he-ki no — o kwan.  
 Wa-ga ken wa sudhi-o-re — wa-ga u ma-wa taw'ru —  
 shu-fu\_ ho-ne wou-zu - mu\_ ko-ky o - no — ya-ma.

The dance accompanying this poem is a graphic epitome of tragic art. A warrior enters, kneels, ties a scarf about his brow to hold the sweat, and binds up his sleeves. This symbolic action depicts preparation for battle, even as in Biblical days the hero "girded up his loins." With a few swift movements the warrior describes the siege, the cutting of his way through the surrounding soldiers, his broken sword, fallen horse and the hundred leagues of battle ground. Then he drops on his knees, lifts his sword from the ground, and with a face tense with purpose grasps the

blade with both hands, pierces himself and falls. But only to struggle up again as, thrusting his sword into the ground he leans upon its hilt and lifts himself, straining to his full height while with head thrown back he casts one last glance at his native mountain—and then falls prone. Rising again to his knees he clasps his hands before him on the ground and bows his head upon them.

The dance lasts but a moment. True to Japanese art there is here neither superfluity of thought nor of expression, and every movement has significance. The ivory-colored face with scarf-bound brow seems the living mask of tragedy and the dramatic postures have a dignity that is epic in power. Such dances, appealing to national aspiration, help to keep brightly burning the flame of that stern and heroic passion that we know as Japanese patriotism.

The western world has already borrowed much from Japan, even as Japan has taken from us, and European arts and crafts bear striking testimony to the influence of Japanese culture. As one of our greatest educational problems in the United States is to train a heterogeneous foreign population to standards of American citizenship, could we not perhaps receive in this effort a helpful suggestion from the art of Japan which is so closely related to the life of the people? Would a simple American adaptation of the principles of the Japanese classic dance (noble, patriotic poetry inculcating national ideals, linked with music and pantomime) be an educational addition to the folk-dancing already taught in most of our public schools?

## ROBERT VOLKMANN

(1815-1883)

By VIKTOR von HERZFELD

THE stately Royal Musical Academy at Budapest is adorned with the effigies of its three patron-saints. Franz Liszt's mighty figure is enthroned in the middle, on a curule chair; on either side there are the portrait-medallions of Franz Erkel and Robert Volkmann. These three, though as different as three thoroughbred musicians can be; different, too, with regard to their reputation and the circulation of their works, have a common right to their places of honour. All three of them gave instruction at the Royal Academy. All three, though strangers to the Hungarian tongue, were bound by strong ties to Hungarian music, which they endeavoured to develop and propagate with untiring zeal and brilliant success. Franz Liszt is the only one of these three magi from the East who needs no special introduction. The world was his realm, and the glory of his crown has not begun to fade as yet. Tired of his wanderings and his triumphs, he returned to the home of his childhood, and in his modest school-room (the splendid edifice of the Royal Academy was built long after his death) he gathered his pupils about him, those pupils who were still granted the boon of hearing Liszt's playing, when it had become a myth to all the rest of the world. Franz Erkel, the Hungarian national composer *par excellence*, worked at his side as a teacher of the piano. His operas, all of which treat national subjects, were borne up by a mighty wave of political and national enthusiasm, and enjoyed an immense popularity, which still vibrates audibly today.

Now let us turn to Robert Volkmann. There is not the slightest romance in the life-story of the simple cantor's son from the heart of Germany, who ended by looking down in effigy as a patron-saint of Hungarian music, upon the sons of Árpád passing below; it all came about in the most prosaic way. Volkmann, born on April 6, 1815, at Lommatzsch in Saxony, was on the point of giving up the post of a music-teacher at Prague, when a Hungarian countess named Stainlein Gaalenstein summoned him to her country-seat, Szemeréd near Jpolyság, to instruct her two daughters in music and singing. Another teacher had offered his

services, but she preferred Volkmann, because the other was named "Langweil" (tedium, ennui). "Name ist Schall und Rauch," and yet a name decided an artist's career in this case.

Excepting an interruption of several years, the Hungarian soil that Volkmann first set foot on as the Countess of Stainlein's music-teacher did not release him again, and now encloses for ever all that was mortal of the artist. Volkmann was twenty-six years old when he entered the service of the Countess. As a musician he had learnt everything that education in a German cantor's house and the instruction of efficient experts can give a talented young man by way of viaticum. At the age of nine he had begun to compose, at thirteen he had written an aria for soprano which is still extant, and his Opus 1, "Phantasiestücke für Klavier," appeared in the year 1837. No resolution was needed for him to devote himself to music as a profession. His head and his heart were filled with music, and he had never doubted of his vocation. Like Schubert, he felt "that he had only come into the world in order to compose." He had never acquired a virtuoso's skill on any instrument, and it may be supposed that he, a man living his own life, and a stranger to the world and its ways, never strove for any such skill, as he would never have coveted any public post, not even that of a conductor. So he gained his modest sustenance by giving private lessons, and was happy, if he had time left to dream the dreams from which he fashioned his works of art.

Though the noble Hungarian lady's country-seat afforded him ample leisure, the fruits of which were several still unpublished compositions and the book of songs, Opus 2, yet it could not give what is indispensable to a young artist: the artistic inspiration of concerts and representations of operas that only a great city can supply. The young musician was on the verge of melancholy madness in the spring of the year 1841, when he made up his mind to bid farewell to Szemeréd. He took a friendly leave of his kind patroness and chose the Hungarian capital, Pest, for his future residence, because it was near and the Countess's letters of introduction gave him access to the most distinguished musical houses there.

At that time not one of the works that were to establish Volkmann's reputation was written. However, he succeeded in attracting the benevolent attention of the musical circles of Pest by some of the compositions completed at Szemeréd—a sonata for the violin and pianoforte, some songs, an overture for orchestra, all unpublished. Then followed years blessed with musical

production; masterpiece upon masterpiece sprang into existence. Volkmann's genius soared higher and higher, till at last, with the Trio in B flat minor it reached a towering pinnacle. But even this work, though bearing unmistakably the stamp of genius, only slowly succeeded in asserting itself. It appeared in print, thanks to some admiring friends, and Franz Liszt graciously accepted its dedication; but it found no favour either with the critics or the public. It was only through the enthusiastic and untiring propaganda of Hans von Bülow and other artists that the work, which is not easily understood, gained a wider circle of friends, and made its author's name popular in the musical world.

When Volkmann's compositions, and especially his string-quatuors had met with warm appreciation in Vienna, he thought the time had come for him to move to the town of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. It took poor Volkmann about four years to gain the conviction that there was no chance for him to earn even a pittance in that ancient seat of music, which had allowed greater musicians than he to suffer want within its precincts. He turned his back on Vienna, a disappointed man, and returned to Pest for good. There he had true friends, one of whom was his publisher, Gustav Heckenast, the enthusiastic, self-sacrificing and truly art-loving protector of aspiring talent.<sup>1</sup> There he was again surrounded by the warmhearted, if rather humdrum, circle of admirers, so congenial to his simple nature. It was natural for a German musician to feel at home in the Pest of those days, which was more German than Hungarian. Volkmann was a member of the "Roastbeef Club," and as such had to take his turn in writing a journal for its social evenings. Some of the entries from his pen are still extant and give evidence of his quaint, pleasant humour, which sometimes rose to effective satire. In the year 1875 the composer, then almost an old man, was relieved from all further pecuniary embarrassment by having the post of professor of composition at the newly founded Royal Academy of Music conferred upon him.

He had his simple bachelor's quarters at Buda, the quaint, old-fashioned town on the hilly shore of the Danube, which had but recently been absorbed by the brilliant new metropolis Budapest. The joy and pride of the lonely artist was the glorious view from his windows on the broad, glittering river, the wide stretch of the city beyond it and the gentle slopes of his own lovely hills. Here the old man created works, fresh with the bloom of

<sup>1</sup>Heckenast published among other works the first books of the Austrian authors Adalbert Stifter and Peter Rosegger.

youth. At the Academy of Pest he gave his lessons in an easy-going yet conscientious way, never knowing a day of illness until, suddenly and gently, without any previous warning, death came upon him, October 30th, 1883.

It is not easy to say briefly what Robert Volkmann did for music. His excellent biographer and nephew, Dr. Hans Volkmann, whose name has been made widely known by his valuable researches in the history of music, and from whose "Life of Robert Volkmann" we took the foregoing data, has characterized the master and his works with such delicate discrimination and at the same time so "objectively," to use a German expression, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of letting him speak in person. After remarking that the great variety of Volkmann's works makes a general characterization impossible, he continues as follows:

His works have only a very few qualities in common: the unfailing nobility of his artistic taste, a strange, almost ethereal sweetness of sound, the glamour of which is only too often discernible to the expert alone, and the severe logic in the development of ideas. He has sometimes been praised for keeping strictly to the pure classical forms. This can be said of a part of his works only; for, wherever the old forms did not suit him, he created new ones, that were all his own.

One virtue of Volkmann's was to write only when he had something to say. Hence the comparatively small number of his works, hence also the fact that there are very few failures among them. This may be considered an advantage, when comparing him to some composers who have so successfully managed to hide a few excellent productions in a legion of inane ones.

Strictly speaking, Volkmann cannot be ranged in any group of composers. He was neither exclusively a disciple of Beethoven, nor of Mozart, neither a classicist like Mendelssohn, nor a romanticist like Schumann—and yet he was all this at times. He absorbed all these influences and assimilated them completely to his own nature. A self-dependent personality, that cannot be compared to any other, speaks in his works.

He struck his roots deeply in the general development of music, and the tree that sprung from them stood firm in the rush and flow of his time.

From the vantage-ground he had gained, he influenced the great movement, especially through his orchestral music, and so became a link in the chain which binds the future to the past. An appearance, though not dazzling, yet important in its place, that will always be mentioned with honour in the annals of music.

I have some remarks to add to this final sentence. First of all, I must confess to somewhat heretical opinions with regard to the "annals of music." These annals mention with honour many a composer who has obtained undisputed fame, while his works are

shrouded in oblivion just as undisputed. The renown of such composers may be immortal, but their works are dead. The works of Volkmann, however, though no towering landmarks in the history of art, are still alive, and, if I may venture to prophesy in such a matter, will outlive our and future generations. This might be called a bold prediction, in view of the undeniable fact that Volkmann's music occupies no prominent place in the programmes of our concerts, and that his name is either unknown to the musical world of today or mentioned without due gratitude. However, the fault must be sought not in any inherent deficiency of his works, but in the general management of modern musical life, the blight of which is, or at least seems to be in my eyes, the enormous number of inwardly unmusical people who throng our opera-houses and concert-rooms. What I now purpose to say is meant to throw more light on this assertion.

The genius of Richard Wagner has given birth to a proud series of glorious masterpieces, containing a superabundance of inspiringly beautiful, highly original music. But it is not this *wealth* which has caused their boundless popularity, boundless because it reaches far beyond the circle of the truly musical. Wagner rejected in his musical dramas all those features of the opera which were repugnant to a vast number of people, cultured, but unmusical at the core: the rounded-off pieces of music, retarding the development of the plot, the repetition of words and sentences, the singing of several persons at a time. All this has been avoided as much as possible in Wagner's dramas. The music—eminently valuable as it is in itself—has been everywhere subordinated to the action.

People who find that Mozart's operas have nothing to say to them, and shake their heads at Wagner himself for admiring the dramatist Mozart, are interested, nay, enthusiastic admirers of Wagner's musical dramas. Snobs of all kinds, of literature, art, or general culture, think they know now why they would have nothing to do with the music of yesterday: not because they themselves lack the special taste for music, but because the older style of music, that has been surpassed by Wagner, was not the right sort. At the Wagner representations you can observe the same persons writhing in the excess of their own enthusiasm, to whom a string-quartet by Beethoven seems an unintelligible noise. This applies to symphonic music as well. Here the bridge for the unmusical is formed by the programme, often by the very title of our modern descriptive music. When hearing an Andante by Mozart or a Scherzo by Beethoven, the unmusical listener strives

in vain to find out the meaning of these sounds; an up-to-date symphonist saves him this trouble, by putting into his hand a programme carefully written in prose or in verse. Besides, the concert-guide, the annotated programme, the "thematische Leitfaden" tell even the least musical person of the audience what he ought to feel at every bar, which passage should claim his special admiration, and in what currents his emotions should flow. I believe these musical Baedekers to be superfluous and pernicious.

They are superfluous, for the genuine music-lover yields to the purely musical impressions and needs no hints and no suggestions for their enjoyment. They are pernicious, because, while pretending to popularize art, they create in thousands the delusion not only of musical enjoyment, but also of a right to criticise. It is true that without this crowd of outsiders the wholesale business representing the music of today would be impossible; and so, from the point of view of impresarios, proprietors of concert-halls, agents, in one word of business-men, it is justifiable to attract the multitude by fair means or foul. Among business-men we may count conductors and instrumentalists, inasmuch as they naturally practise their art, not from ideal motives only, but with an eye to their subsistence and profit.

Under such circumstances, music that offers no handle to clever or profound expositions, that does not support the weakness of the listener by far-fetched titles or detailed programmes, is in a sad plight. And this is the case with Volkmann's music. With a single exception, the overture to "Richard III," Volkmann wrote no descriptive music.

But there is another circumstance which prevents the appreciation of his music in wider circles. A new tendency is observable in the public, to think that good music must be dry, complicated and uncompromising, and to brand clearness, grace and natural feeling with the stigma of triviality. This explains the remarkable and lamentable fact that nowadays the dull production of an un-gifted constructor of music, that lumbers along heavily, pretending to carry a load of learning and profound thought, has more chance of general appreciation than the light and graceful work of the true artist, from whose warm heart the sweetest sounds and richest melodies flow as freely and gladly as the crystal spring flows from its mother earth. A great and influential part of the public, influenced through its numbers principally, which admires Brahms, not for his creative power, originality and sublime technique, but for a certain spiritual asceticism and proud reserve that distinguishes many of his works, is more inclined to

applaud the efficient but prosaic *disciple* of Brahms, than our Volkmann, whose technical mastership, an object of admiration to the expert, is frequently so discreet that it seems to form the mere scaffolding for a trim and well-proportioned, bright and cosy building.

And now I ask permission to quote one of the most original among our musical thinkers, Dr. Heinrich Schenker. He says in the essay entitled "Counterpoint":

The present generation has not even the faculty of grasping the technique of the masters, and yet this ought to be considered as the first and indispensable step towards any kind of progress. Measured by the works of our great masters, the compositions of today must be called too simple, far too simple and primitive! For all their mighty orchestration, noise and ado, for all their polyphony and cacophony, the proud musical poems of a Richard Strauss rank far, nay very far below a quatuor by Haydn, the complicated structure of which is hidden beneath a garment of grace and beauty, as the miracle of a flower's creation is veiled by colour and fragrance.

I should never dream of placing Volkmann beside Haydn with regard to superabundance of inspiration and playful lightness of technique, but it may be said of Volkmann's works, too, that colour and fragrance veil the miracle of their creation; as indeed must be the case with every true-born work of art. And that is why our musical business-men pass him by unnoticed, and why many of those true music-lovers who are now kept in the background hardly know his name.

We regret to state that the leading men in the musical world have not done as much for Volkmann as for inferior talents. Even an artist of such genius as Josef Joachim allowed the orthodoxy of his surroundings to influence him so much that he banished Volkmann's quartets from his programmes, because he considered them "too Italian."

Also Bülow, who had introduced Volkmann to the public with as much energy as success, abandoned him in later years, herein obeying the power of gravitation exercised by mightier stars. Brahms himself spoke of him with little warmth, a fact for which I can find no explanation. When I one day observed with regret that Volkmann had composed but little, and had not met with due appreciation for what he had written, Brahms said somewhat morosely: "Why should any one compose? Everything has been composed already." "Besides," he added, "there are no undervalued geniuses. The trio in B flat minor has had the success it deserves." "And the quartets?" I ventured to interpose. "I

do not know the quartets," he answered brusquely, and, noticing my surprise, he added: "I do not know the quartets, because no scores of them have been printed." This was a lamentable fact at that time, as the Hungarian publisher had thought it superfluous and maybe too expensive to print more than the separate parts of the quartets. This want has been supplied only quite recently by a German publisher. Also in other ways it was a serious disadvantage for Volkmann that most of his works appeared in Hungarian editions and could not profit by the rich means and widespread organizations through which German publishers are able to further the circulation of musical works.

I hope I have not tried the reader's patience too much with the foregoing disquisition, which I thought necessary as an explanation for the general neglect of Volkmann and his music. I feel I cannot celebrate the hundredth anniversary of his birthday in a better way than by leading all those who have a feeling for the musically beautiful, all those who are not the slaves of a tendency, or the mere echoes of a party-cry, to that source of noblest artistic enjoyment which flows so profusely in Volkmann's works. With this aim in view, I shall now give short characterizations of his most important creations.

The trio in B flat minor was the first revelation of the master's genius. After a gloomy introduction, shrouded in deep melancholy, follows a graceful allegretto, rippling with glimpses of bright humour; then an allegro rushes along in a whirl of passionate anguish, interrupted once by the sweet cantilene of an adagio, in which the voices of the violoncello and the violin are delicately interwoven. The gloom deepens again, as the theme of the introduction returns, the violin breaks into a recitative of heart-rending sweetness, and then all this sadness dies away in weary resignation. The themes and motives are plastic, original, and for all their kinship with Beethoven, highly personal, genuine Volkmanns, as is all the music originating from his pen. What is essential to perfection in music is there: severe unity of form, in spite of striking contrast, the connecting links wrought with the utmost delicacy, no inane passage, no senseless flourish in the whole trio; all this is the more admirable as the composer has here, as often elsewhere, abandoned the usual design. Possessing an absolutely unerring sense of form—an important part of the creative capacity—he was able to dispose freely of *forms* without infringing upon the *form*. Ever since some famous estheticians proved their misconception of Beethoven by extolling him for shattering the old forms, our young musical titans consider it

their first and foremost duty to continue this "shattering," for which indeed far less talent and industry are needed than for mastering the technique of form.

The trio in B flat minor requires efficient performers for the piano and the string-instruments, but the task it sets them is a grateful one and richly rewards their trouble.

When once a domestic string-quartet has a mind to play something beside the standard works of chamber-music, I recommend Volkmann's quartets. They are genuine music for the home: bright with fancy's loveliest flowers, tender and warm-hearted, dreamy and thoughtful, deep and true, now and again bubbling over with merry laughter, unfailingly original, unfailingly sweet of sound. Here, as elsewhere, we see an exalted and refined art of composition, and the free treatment of form, which is permitted to the master alone. The finale of the quartet in G minor will serve as an example. The defiant theme is twice replaced by a graceful melody, which first appears in B major, causing a feeling of glad surprise, and then after a repetition of the theme of the rondo, is brought in again, by a turn as natural as it is ingenious in C major, the second and yet sweeter surprise. This is true originality, because it reveals deep, harmonious connections; it contrasts with mere wit, which uses superficial, mechanical connecting links for modulations, and it contrasts yet more strongly with the modern fashion of baffling the listener by disconnected harmonies loosely threaded.

The quartet in E minor will please every impartial listener, with its delicate sentiment, only just bordering on sentimentality and its exquisite sounds. Its adagio in F sharp major is a gem: it is fraught with the deepest feelings, the tender harmonies melting into each other, and yet the melodious lines are clearly and elaborately drawn. Also the quartet in G major, with motives from popular songs, and the one in E flat major are sure to win friends. The latter is rhythmically interesting, but rather difficult to play.

Among Volkmann's most original creations we must place the Serenatas for string-orchestra. Tschaikowsky mentions them in a letter to a woman friend:

To-day I had much pleasure in playing some Serenatas by Volkmann. A sympathetic composer. *He has much simplicity and natural beauty.* [Farther on he says:] Do you know that Volkmann is a little old man living in reduced circumstances at Pest? Some time ago a collection was made for him at Moscow, the result of which was 300 rubles. To

show his gratitude he dedicated his second symphony to the Musical Society of Moscow. By the way, I have never been able to find out why he is so poor.

Volkmann could not be called poor in Tschaikowsky's sense of the word, since his habits were so simple and the post he held at the Academy secured him from want, but he *was* poor in fame and appreciation. And we know that he was so of necessity; because already, at this time, an artist was not valued for having "much simplicity and natural beauty." The following incident may serve as an illustration. A Hungarian conductor wished to perform at Madrid the very Serenata that Tschaikowsky admired. At the first rehearsal the whole orchestra refused unanimously to play such trivial music at a concert. The Serenata was not performed. Simplicity and natural beauty were mistaken for triviality, where orchestral noise, a chaos of parts, and bombastic pathos would have been admired as a revelation of genius. The delightful slow waltz in the serenata was probably regarded as the culmination of triviality. Nobody seems to have noticed that it is far more than just a pleasing piece of music, that the artist's own warm heart throbs in it, that it is wrought with unobtrusive but all the more exquisite workmanship. Another serenata, through which the solo of a violoncello runs like a golden thread, has been more fortunate, probably because this solo offers a welcome task to violoncellists, not because, unique in form and invention, it conjures up before our eyes the deep melancholy of the wide Hungarian pusztá.

And now we must characterize Volkmann's relations to Hungarian national music. He has often profited by the suggestions it has given, without ever ceasing to be one of the most German of all German musicians. He sometimes consciously and intentionally utilized Magyar motives, as a German painter might represent Hungarian landscapes or scenes from Hungarian life. The last mentioned Serenata shows a vision of the Puszta, without using for this purpose a single specifically Hungarian theme. Where he does employ such, the titles of the pieces emphasize the subjects, as in the suite for pianoforte, entitled "Visegrád," or in the four-handed "Hungarian Sketches." The tunes and rhythms of these pieces are unmistakably Magyar, and stamp them as true-born children of the Hungarian earth. However, it is this very capability of grasping the essence of a foreign nationality which is so genuinely German.

Beside the charming suite "Visegrád," Volkmann wrote some other excellent and effective music for the piano. His variations

on a theme of Händel's, his sonatas and other pieces clearly show his marked personality; they show, on the other hand, that Volkmann himself was by no means a brilliant pianist, and, at heart, more of a stranger to this instrument than to any other. Still it is a great pity that these pieces are neglected by virtuosi. And the greatest pity is that his "Konzertstück" for the piano and the orchestra has been totally ignored, for it shows Volkmann at the summit of his inspiration and his mastership.

Volkmann has written two symphonies, one profoundly serious in D minor, the other bright and joyous, in B flat major. Even if we were richer than we are in full-weight post-classical symphonies, these two works ought to occupy a permanent place in our concert-programmes. Both are *conceived* symphonically, equally far from orchestral chamber-music and from poetizing, painting or would-be-philosophical programme-music. The one in D minor begins with weighty pathos. The first movement is built upon a theme so plastic, so impressive, that it need fear no comparison. A serious keynote prevails even in the Scherzo which differs widely from all the standard types. The absolutely original theme strides along, as if clad in an armour of steel, and is worked out with exquisite skill. Contrapuntal art, free from all artificialness, gives to the finale its grandiose character. The second symphony forms a contrast to the first. Since Haydn we have heard no symphony gushing forth in such ingenuous gladness of heart, never pretending to be monumental, yet great, and perfect in its proportions. The way in which the rhythmically tingling finale evolves from the musing adagio is entirely new. The theme of the second movement, with its naïve grace, is sure to give as much offence to all musical pharisees as pleasure to the truly expert. A perfect organization, in which all that is beautiful is necessary; all that is necessary, beautiful.

The overture of "Richard III" is worthy to rank with the symphonies. It is programme-music in the best, in the only true sense of the word; music that is inspired by a poetical work, yet would be intelligible and enjoyable without this relation. Even the illustration of a battle it contains, though inferior to no other battle-music in descriptiveness and suggestive power, never oversteps the boundary of the musically beautiful. There is a great uproar of all instruments, there are sharp dissonances, but there is no trace of those horrible cacophonies which in certain modern compositions form modes of expression as cheap as they are inartistic. Themes so different, that they seem to resist each other, are blended by a masterly polyphonic technique so as to

form a perfect whole; this is a proceeding as dissimilar as day is from night to the modern method of plastering several so-called melodies together, leaving it to their own discretion to get on with each other or not. A famous musical scholar tries to legitimize this proceeding by introducing the *terminus technicus* "heterophony." My translation of this term is "irresponsible bungling." For the comprehension of this new branch of technique other estheticians demand "horizontal hearing," instead of "vertical hearing," which, they pretend, has been in use till now. Or do they want it the other way round? I must own that I am not fully informed on this point, and that I believe both versions to be complete nonsense. One word more about the overture to "Richard III." It had no success in England. The composer wove into his battle-music a popular Scotch ballad, ("The Campbells are coming") under the mistaken impression that it was an old English war-song. This tune seems to have given offence to the British audience, for reasons unknown to me.

And now let us turn to Volkmann's instrumentation. His orchestra, though lacking the formidable array of modern innovations, is deficient neither in strength nor in richness and variety of colours. In this he must be ranked far above Schumann, whom he resembles in the chaste tenderness of his feelings and the character of his diction. The symphonist Volkmann *thinks* "orchestrally." He knows his instrument, the orchestra, so well, that he is able to attain his ends with the least possible waste. I could name modern composers, admired chiefly for their art of orchestration, from whose scores we could easily cancel a dozen parts without marring the effect. Volkmann's Serenatas for string-instruments are miracles of orchestration; in this narrow frame we have never heard sounds so full and so delicate, so varied and so sweet.

If we mention further his admirable Concerto for Violoncello, Op. 33, and his valuable compositions for chorus—sacred and profane, a cappella or with accompaniment—we have the work of Volkmann before us in its completeness. Strange to say, this artist, so eminently lyrical in the intensity and tenderness of his emotions, has not excelled in song. An opera he did not even attempt. We cannot now decide whether the libretti offered to him were really unsuitable, or whether he was too severe a critic, but we are inclined to accept the first explanation. That he was not deficient in dramatic talent is shown by his scene "Sappho" for soprano and orchestra. It is written in an elevated style, constructed with perfect musical logic and yet does

not fall short of dramatic expression. Music predominates, as indeed it must, the moment a musical note is struck, but full justice is done to poetry as well. There are signs that at no very distant period this principle, kept down by Wagner's paramount personality, will receive due honours again. Nay, even today the "Sprechgesang" is accepted only from him who created it, and was compelled to create it by his specific genius.

If I have tried in the foregoing lines to sketch a picture of the musician Robert Volkmann, it was not done with the purpose of pressing upon the world another hero, not even with the purpose of doing posthumous justice to an artist who has been misunderstood by his contemporaries. I myself do not consider Volkmann a hero, only a genuine, original and creative musician. And such a one finds his reward not in the appreciation of the multitude, which he is free to despise, but in the joy of creation, an exquisite happiness only granted to the chosen few. I do not pity Schubert, though his short term of musical production was so poor in appreciation and material reward. He alone among millions was allowed to stroll in a garden of bliss and to pluck fragrant blossoms and sweet fruits from the trees that bent their boughs to him as to their master. What meaning could the judgment of his own or a future age have for this wanderer in the fields of the blessed?

Neither is Volkmann—I do not compare him with Schubert, but I may mention him beside this singer of singers, because his was a talent by the grace of God—neither is Volkmann in need of pity or protection. However I thought, by pointing to Volkmann's works, to serve those true music-lovers who, among the turbulent wholesale-management of our musical life, have preserved a receptiveness for works of art which, if they cannot be called monumental, do not either come in for monumentality. In a letter of Volkmann's we find the following passage, which is not only characteristic of him, but generally valid and remarkably opportune at the present time:

You tell me of some works which have produced in you an effect of elementary power. If you mean material power, i. e. effect of the masses, I readily believe that the movement by Berlioz you mention has risen to the highest pitch. I will not question the value of this or other elementary pieces, as there really are works of this kind, producing an overwhelming effect, but, since you seem to regard the elementary effect or effect of masses as the greatest merit in a piece of music, I must own that I think many a quiet little andante has more poetical value than many of those elementary earthquake-pieces.

Of composers producing elementary or earthquake-pieces there is no lack, but to my knowledge there is not a single musician living

who could sing into our hearts the quiet little andante to which, according to Volkmann's and also to my opinion, must be awarded the higher poetical value.

In every other art the quiet little andantes are valued to-day in their own way, beside monumental creations. Painting has its intimate genre-pictures, its still-life pictures, its delicate water-colours and etchings. In poetry a graceful group of lyrical verses or a concise short story is admired no less than a voluminous pathetic work. Nay, we may say that the "grandes machines," the enormous battle-pictures have lost much of their prestige, and that modern man does not urge his poets to present him with heroic poetry, be it of the epic or dramatic kind. Why should the "grandes machines" prevail in the music of to-day? Why do we close our ears to the quiet little andante, that speaks to the soul? And may we hope that this will change within a measurable space of time? Perhaps it will, when the colossal, dazzling fireworks have expired, leaving smoke and ashes behind; perhaps it will, when all this uproar is hushed, and we are able to hear again the delicate yet penetrating tones of that "quiet little andante."

<sup>1</sup>He alludes to the "Marche au Supplice" from the *Sinfonie fantastique*.

## PAULINE VIARDOT-GARCIA TO JULIUS RIETZ (LETTERS OF FRIENDSHIP)

**P**AULINE VIARDOT-GARCIA died at Paris on May 18, 1910. Her name, of course, carried a guarantee that no mere mediocrity in the world of art had expired, yet the news of her death came as a shock to comparatively few music-lovers of our time. Her death was felt by but few of us as an irreparable personal loss, such as the passing of Caruso would be to many thousands of music-lovers to-day. With an impersonal historical interest, if any, we read obituary accounts like the following:

Pauline Viardot-Garcia was born in Paris on July 18, 1821, as the daughter of the famous Spanish tenor and singing-master Manuel del Popolo Vicente Garcia and as sister of the equally famous Maria Malibran Garcia. She received her earliest piano-lessons from Marcos Vega in New York, at the time that her father introduced Italian grand opera there in 1825. The finishing touches to her remarkable pianistic equipment were administered by Liszt. She studied composition with Reicha and the art of singing with her father and mother, but principally with her brother Manuel. In 1840 Pauline Garcia married the distinguished impresario and art-critic Louis Viardot, and she became the devoted mother of several children of conspicuous musical talent.

Mme. Viardot made her début as a singer in 1837 at Brussels, and within a few years she was hailed everywhere in Europe as the equal of her sister Maria, whose premature death had occurred in 1836. Pauline's voice was a mezzo-soprano—or contralto, the authorities disagree—but was so extended by art as to compass more than three octaves, from the bass C to F in alt. She created the rôle of Fidès in Meyerbeer's "Le Prophète" and sang the part more than 200 times in the principal opera-houses of Europe. She also created the title-part in Gounod's "Sappho" in 1851. Other famous parts in her extensive repertoire were Desdemona (in Rossini's "Otello"), Norma, Lucia, Zerlina, Fidelio, Azucena, Orphée, Alceste. Mme. Viardot won equal triumphs on the concert-stage. In later life she became quite successful as a teacher of singing, Désirée Artôt, Orgeni, Marianne Brandt, Antoinette Sterling being among her best known pupils.

In 1863 Mme. Viardot left the stage, fixed her abode at Baden-Baden and henceforth appeared only at concerts, in London as late as 1870. The Franco-Prussian war obliged her to take up her residence in Paris. There she continued to be the centre of a distinguished circle of

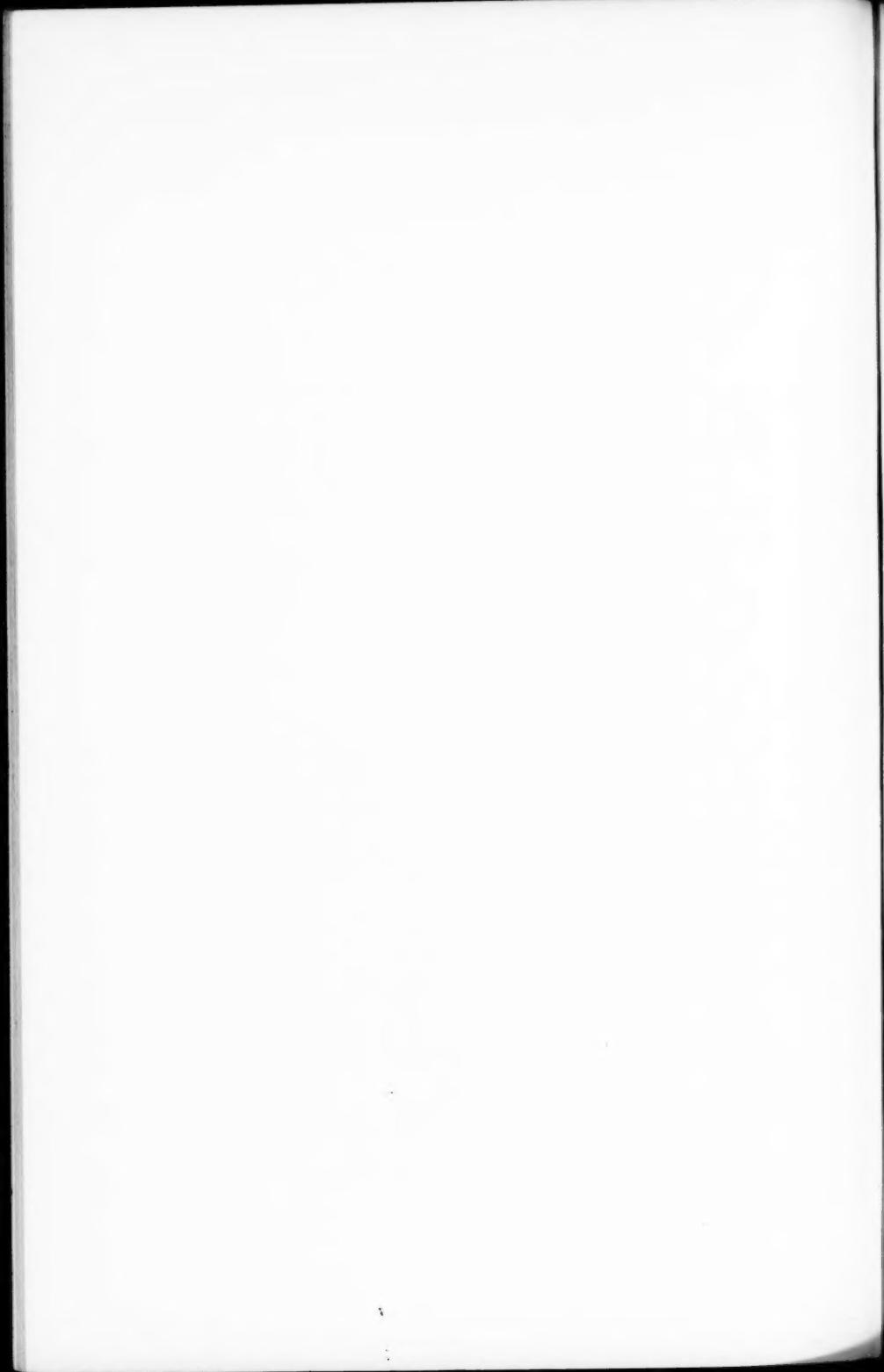


A 25 ans.—D'après le tableau d'Ary Scheffer

A 25 ans.—Phot. Boissinot et Taponier



Mme. Pauline Viardot—Collection J.-L. Croze  
(From L'Illustration, 1910)



friends, to whom on frequent occasions (on her famous "Thursdays") she would unfold, with impaired voice perhaps, but with unimpaired art, her greatness as a singer.

Mme. Viardot composed many songs and several unpublished operettas to texts by her friend Turgenieff. These operettas were performed in her little private theatre at Baden-Baden by her pupils and children. Mme. Viardot was a passionate collector of autographs, her main treasure being the original manuscript of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" which she presented to the Paris Conservatoire. Ary Scheffer's portrait of her is generally considered the best.

Such dry biographical data—accessible enough to necrologists, editors and to the curious in general in the ever-handy Grove and elsewhere—were not and are not exactly calculated to restore the dead to life. They resemble the inscription on a tombstone rather than a portrait. At any rate, so dryly put as above, they hardly project the picture of a commanding and fascinating figure in art on our mental screen. Still, the fact that a queen of song bids her admiring subjects a lasting farewell, when she has barely crossed the threshold of forty, speaks for a rather remarkable personality, even if we know that this decision was made easier by evidences of strain in an overtaxed voice. Not until curiosity brings one into contact with the literature on singers of the past, does Pauline Viardot-Garcia begin to cast a spell over those who never were fortunate enough to hear her.

It would be easy, of course, to compile from the contemporary literature on Pauline Viardot-Garcia one more rhapsody of rapture and to add it to the more or less convincing gallery of portraits of "women I never knew," but why rely on the efficacy of paraphrases? If this or that reader wishes to be formally introduced to Mme. Viardot before venturing into the privacy of her letters, surely he will prefer an introduction by some of her most intimate and distinguished friends in their own words to an introduction at second or third hand, as at state-functions. The letters here published present Pauline Viardot-Garcia at the zenith of her career; it might therefore be considered anachronistic to quote George Sand's description of her or Alfred de Musset's glowing tribute (in prose and poetry) to her Parisian début in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" of 1839, when he censured the attempt to compare his idols Maria Malibran-Garcia and Pauline with the inimitable phrase: "On ne surpasse pas la perfection." But it so happens that three immortals in the realm of music stand ready to guide the reader into the presence of the mature Pauline Viardot-Garcia: Liszt, Berlioz and Saint-Saëns. On their judgment he may safely rely, should the letters fail to impress him with

being in the presence of a great, a very great artist not only, but of an accomplished, good and lovely woman.

Out of the fulness of his respect and admiration for his friend, Liszt in 1859 devoted a striking, if somewhat stilted, essay to her in which these sentences occur:

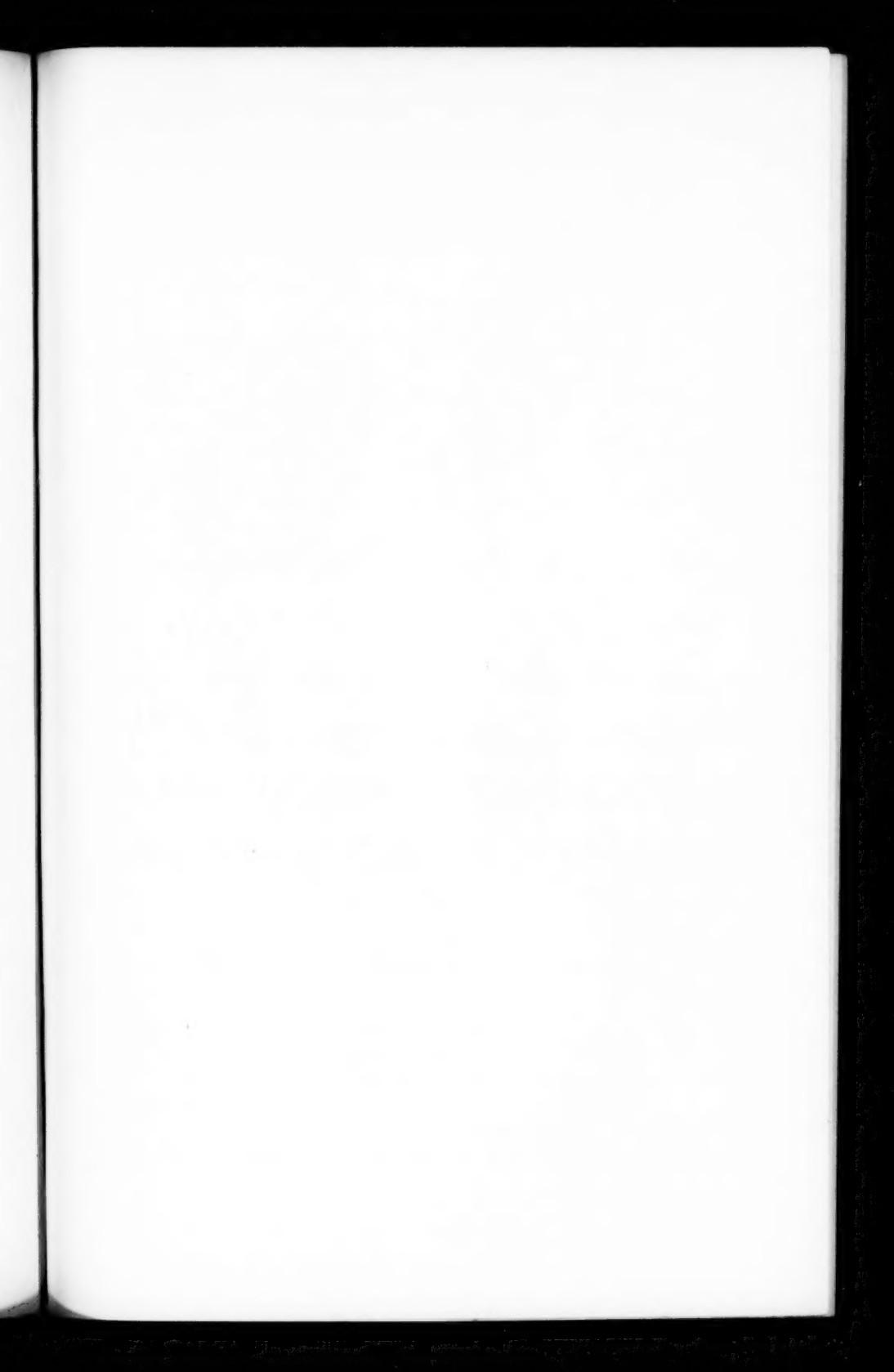
From the beginning of her career, Pauline Viardot-Garcia gained the ranks of those *art-poets* who do not gradually wrest from the public a fame, temporary and characteristic of the fashion of the day, but who acquire it from the start decisively and permanently by dint of mature, plastic and artistically perfect creations, the fruits of depth of soul and of excellent training. Since her first public appearance she has belonged to the most brilliant dramatic stars of our time and will forever be considered one of the most honored celebrities of this epoch. For all time she will remain one of the first in the exclusive group of a *Pasta*, *Malibran*, *Schröder-Devrient*, *Ristori*, *Rachel*, *Seebach* and others. Furthermore, she will hold a position apart from others by force of the variety of her talents, her equal mastery of Italian, French and German art, her extraordinary cultural accomplishments, the nobility of her character and the purity of her private life.

After the revival of Gluck's "Orphée" in 1859 with Mme. Viardot in the title-rôle Berlioz wrote (see his "A travers chants"):

To speak of Madame Viardot would really require a special essay. Her talent is so complete and varied; it touches so many points of art and combines with so much science a so entrancing spontaneity that it produces at one and the same time both astonishment and emotion; it strikes and yet appeals; it overawes and persuades. Her voice, of an exceptional range, is at the service of the most consummate vocalisation and of that artful phrasing of the *chant large* which has become so rare nowadays. She unites an irrepressibly impetuous and imperious verve with a profound sensibility and with an almost deplorable faculty for expressing immense grief. Her gestures are sane, noble and true to life, and her power of facial expression is even more remarkable in dumb scenes than in those where she has to reinforce therewith the accents of song.

That Saint-Saëns upon the news of Mme. Viardot's death paid an eloquent tribute to her was but fitting, for she had befriended him and had championed his cause for more than forty years. From his eulogy, now accessible in that charming collection of essays called "*École buissonnière*" (1913), the following lines have been selected, and it will be noticed that Saint-Saëns did not permit his grief to obscure his critical vision of times bygone:

Her voice was of enormous power and of prodigious range, but this marvellous voice, trained to surmount all the difficulties of vocal art,





Julius Rietz

(Aug. Kampf, Phot., Aix-La-Chapelle)

From the Collection of Rud. E. Schirmer

did not please everybody. Hers was not a voice of velvet or of crystal, but a voice just a trifle harsh and occasionally was compared to the flavor of bitter-sweet oranges. It was made by nature for tragedy or *épopée*, superhuman rather than human. Light things, such as Spanish chansons or Chopin's Mazourkas transcribed by her for the voice, assumed a different shape through the medium of her own voice. They became the *bardinages* of giants, but to the accents of tragedy, to the severities of oratorio, she imparted an incomparable grandeur.

Mme. Viardot was not beautiful: worse than that. Ary Scheffer's portrait of her is the only one which does justice to this unequalled woman. No other gives an adequate idea of her strange powers of fascination. Her personality rendered her even more captivating than her talent as a singer; without doubt her personality was one of the most astonishing I have encountered. Speaking and writing fluently Spanish, French, Italian, English and German, she was conversant with the literature of all countries and she corresponded with all Europe . . .

"All Europe" would include nonentities and mediocrities. To these Julius Rietz certainly did not belong, though he has long since been forgotten by "all Europe." To begin with the non-essential facts of his life: Julius Rietz was born at Berlin on December 28, 1812, and he died at Dresden on September 12, 1877. Barely twenty years of age, the young 'cellist and conductor attracted the attention of Mendelssohn, who gave him his start as one of the best conductors produced by Germany, in 1834 at Düsseldorf. The stature of Rietz as a conductor may be gauged by the fact that he succeeded Gade as conductor of the famous "Gewandhaus" concerts at Leipsic in 1848 and Reissiger in 1860 as "Hofkapellmeister" in Dresden, rising in 1874 to the rank, title and emoluments of a "Kgl. Sächsischer Generalmusik-direktor."

His *forte* was the interpretation of Händel, Bach, the classics and Mendelssohn. The moderns of the Liszt-Berlioz-Wagner school of musical thought Rietz heartily detested, yet he was too conscientious and intelligent an artist not have to set his pride, for instance, in well-rounded performances of Wagner's operas. As a composer he is said to have been strongly influenced by Mendelssohn. This and a lack of individual utterance have relegated his technically perfect music—and a most industrious composer he was, in forms large and small—to the shelves of libraries, though during his lifetime his works enjoyed considerable popularity and fame. To-day very little more than his "Morgenlied" for male chorus has survived the change in taste.

Rietz was a musician of an intellectual, scholarly type of mind, and it was said of him that he would have gained distinction as a philologist, had he not started out as a musician. Quite

naturally he drifted into editing and his chief effort in that direction was the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of Mendelssohn's complete works.

Rietz must have been quite a "character," unbending in his likes and dislikes, manly and fearless in his utterances, brooking no interference with his functions, ruling his forces with an iron hand, abhorring compromise and intrigue alike. As his tongue was of the sharpest and as he dealt his blows with a club in true Teutonic fashion, his enemies were many, and his friends few. Very sensitive to criticism, he gradually accumulated an uncomfortable fund of bitterness, augmented by disappointments and family troubles and reduced only now and then by a keen sense of humor. In his virtues and defects Julius Rietz appears to have been a typical German, such as one would not ordinarily suspect of attracting a woman of the Latin race. Yet there can be no doubt that this man fascinated Pauline Viardot-Garcia and that he stirred the depths of her soul into a passionate longing for his friendship.

\* \* \*

*Donnerstag 22<sup>ten</sup> April, 5 Uhr.*

Lieber Herr Rietz

Wenn Sie diesen Abend frei sind,  
bringen Sie Ihre Ouvertüren u. s. w.  
und wir werden sie vierhändig spielen.  
Lassen Sie mir wissen ob es Ihnen  
angenehm ist. Von 7 Uhr werde ich  
Sie erwarten.

Ihre Freundin  
**PAULINE VIARDOT**

*Thursday, April 22, 5 o'clock.*

Dear Herr Rietz

If you are at liberty this evening,  
bring your overtures, etc., and we will  
play them four-handed. Let me know  
if it is agreeable to you. From seven  
o'clock I shall expect you.

Your friend  
**PAULINE VIARDOT**

This was the first letter written by Mme. Viardot to Julius Rietz. At any rate, it is the earliest in the collection of about one hundred of her letters to him, now in the possession of Mr. Rudolph E. Schirmer—and here published with practically no changes in Mme. Viardot's orthography, grammar, syntax, etc. Such changes were found to be unnecessary, for hardly ever do her liberties with the German language obscure her ideas. Moreover her grammatical inaccuracies add a delicious flavor to her language for readers familiar with German, and those who are not, will not notice them. In case of trouble, Dr. Theodore Baker's translation will serve as a first aid to the wounded.

Mme. Viardot's first epistle to Rietz is a rather dry note at its best and certainly holds out no promises to those whose hobby it is to read letters of distinguished people. Whether or not Rietz replied, does not appear. Nor is the point essential. His art as a conductor and his personality had made a lasting impression on Mme. Viardot when she sang at the Gewandhaus on February 11 and March 7, 1858, for the annual charity concert, reappearing for a third concert on April 10 and for three guest-performances at the Opera during the same month, with such success that the critic of the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik" called her "the greatest singer of our time." Mme. Viardot—that is plain enough from her letters—deliberately set about to win the friendship of the rather reserved and suspicious Rietz. She had not quite completed her task when she left Leipsic, but she returned to Leipsic and its Gewandhaus the middle of December and battered down the last defenses of her "Bear." He capitulated just at the time that Mme. Viardot went to Weimar to fill operatic engagements at the Grand-ducal opera-house, singing, for instance, in Bellini's "Norma" on December 19 and in Rossini's "Barber of Seville" on December 22. This separation of the two friends gave impetus to correspondence, and there followed for several months a torrential exchange of letters between the two.

Those of Mme. Viardot are far too numerous and often too long—she must have had a speedy and untiring hand—to be published here in their entirety. A selection had to be made and the length of many of the letters simply forbade publishing more than mere excerpts from them. Immediately personal taste entered into this editorial task and it may be that letters or parts of letters were suppressed which others would have included in preference to some here published. Personal taste also impelled an almost total abstinence from foot-notes, for the editor frankly confesses to a violent dislike for the fad of switching the reader's attention from the trend of thought in letters of distinguished persons to a foot-note on the insignificant holder of a name that happens to be mentioned, or worse still to a foot-note informing the reader gravely that Richard Wagner was a great composer and lived from 1813 to 1883.

In Mme. Viardot's Weimar letters, Franz Liszt, of course, holds the centre of the stage, Liszt, whose music appealed neither to Mme. Viardot, otherwise his respectful admirer, nor to Julius Rietz. And perhaps it was well for their friendship—psychologists might even advance shrewd reasons therefor—that it blossomed forth so vigorously in the very citadel of the "music of the future"

which both so heartily disliked. These Weimar letters of Mme. Viardot, undated, and of uncertain sequence, are grouped here, or rather a selection from them, without further editorial comment.

Sunday, 9 o'clock.

Who would have thought, you say, that you would so soon address me as your friend? I. I felt from the very beginning of our acquaintance that we must be friends, sooner or later. Do you not remember how friendly I was with you forthwith? do not believe that it is always the case—No, I found you wonderfully congenial, and my warm affection drew me toward you—At first you were somewhat astonished, mistrustful, and yet pleased, withal, were you not? Perhaps I seemed to you too familiar, altogether too demonstrative, to feel deeply and seriously? too *southern* in my behavior toward you for one sincere at heart? You were a little afraid of me, confess! The proud, self-absorbed man resented the invasion of his life, of his lonely, hallowed *ego*, by a foreign element—no, he would not permit his dull repose to be disturbed by what might prove an illusion—was it not so?—But I recognized the good, high-souled Man behind the diffident, stiff-necked *Bear*, and did not allow myself to be discouraged . . . and now even he is rather glad of it!

11 o'clock [Sunday.]

Liszt has taken supper with me.—He has only just gone away, and I shall not go to bed until I have told you that Norma went off quite well, that your [lady] friend was very well received and appreciated, and that I felt present tears welling in many *future* eyes.—The house was very full; the conductor, a certain Herr Stör, is a first-class *dragger*; just imagine, I fairly longed for *Rietzus*!<sup>1</sup> My S[illegible] was all the time imitating a dog that has lost his master—it was really *howly*. Liszt assures me that he felt deeply moved and enthusiastic—if I were sure that he is telling the truth I should be very glad. Yesterday he played for me—oh, no one can play as he does—I am perfectly carried away by his playing. I heard the *Rhapsodies* and the *Enterrement* from his *Harmonies*—do you know the latter? it is really very interesting and in my opinion quite easy to understand.<sup>2</sup>—To-day I was at the Altenburg again to practise my voice, and again heard something that did not particularly please me—*Orpheus*, arranged for two pianos. Too much noise and confusion—and yet it has form, and there is a desire of melody in it. One must admit, after all, that he is a most attractive person. It is quite impossible to be more amiable than he is with me. Toward me he is very unaffected, which renders him doubly charming—he is even childlike, and I believe it comes naturally, for he has known me since my childhood. . . maybe he knows that he would waste his

<sup>1</sup>Karl Stör (1814-1899), it is but fair to insist, enjoyed the reputation of being an able conductor and composer. How little Mme. Viardot thought of him appears from a later letter in which she says that Stör had "sewed" the notes of Norma as if they were buttons. The remark about the *future* eyes, of course, was prompted by the ironical term "music of the future" invented against Wagner, Liszt and their followers by Ludwig Bischoff.

<sup>2</sup>Does Mme. Viardot refer to No. 7 "Funérailles" in Liszt's ten "Harmonies poétiques et religieuses"? No piece of the title "Enterrement" is mentioned in the thematic catalogue of Liszt's works. The "Altenburg" mentioned in the next line was the residence of Liszt's friend, the Princess Wittgenstein, at Weimar.

Sonntag um 9 Uhr.

Wer hätte gedacht, sagen Sie, dass Sie mich so bald als Freundin anreden würden? Ich. Ich fühlte gleich vom Anfang unserer Bekanntschaft an, dass wir Freunde sein müssten, bald oder spät. Erinnern Sie sich nicht wie freundlich ich mit Ihnen gleich war? glauben Sie nicht, dass es immer der Fall sey—Nein, Sie waren mir höchst sympathisch und meine warme Zärtlichkeit zog mich Ihnen entgegen—Sie waren Anfangs ein wenig erstaunt, misstrauisch und doch zugleich auch vergnügt, nicht wahr? Vielleicht schien ich Ihnen zu *familiär*, zu sehr nach Aussen um es innig u. ernstlich zu meinen? zu *südlich* mein Benehmen Ihnen gegenüber um aus einem tiefen Gefühl zu kommen? Sie fürchteten sich ein wenig vor mir, ja? Der stolze in sich vertieferte Mensch wollte nicht ein fremdes Element in seinem Leben, in seinem einsamen heiligen *Ich* hineinstürzen lassen—nein, er *wollte* es nicht dass seine öde Ruhe durch vielleicht eine Illusion gestört wäre—Nicht wahr, nicht wahr?—aber ich habe den guten edlen Menschen hinter dem bescheidenen stolzen *Bär* erkannt, und habe mich nicht zurückweisen lassen. . . und endlich freut er sich ein Bischen auch!

11 Uhr [Sonntag]

Liszt hat mit mir suppirt—Jetzt erst ist er fort gegangen und ich will nicht zu Bett gehen ehe Ihnen vorher gesagt zu haben dass die Norma ganz gut gegangen ist, dass Ihre Freundinn sehr gut aufgenommen und empfunden gewesen ist und dass ich gegenwärtige Thränen in manchen zukünftigen Augen gespürt habe—Das Haus war sehr besucht—Der Kapellmeister, ein gewisser Herr Stör, ist ein Schlepper erster Klasse—Denken Sie sich, ich habe mich nach *Rietzus* förmlich geschnkt!<sup>1</sup> Mein S [ ? ] hat fortwährend einen Hund der seinen Herrn verloren hat, nachgeahmt—es war ganz heilig. Liszt versichert mich tief gerührt und enthusiasmiert zu sein—wenn ich gewiss wäre dass er die Wahrheit spricht würde es mich sehr freuen. Gestern hat er mir vorgespielt—nein so wie er spielt kein zweiter—ich bin ganz entzückt von seinem Spiel—Ich habe die *Rhapsodien* und *Enterrement* aus seinen Harmonien gehört—kennen Sie das letztere?<sup>2</sup> es ist wirklich sehr interessant und nach meiner Meinung sehr verständlich.—Heute war ich wieder auf die Altenburg um die Stimme zu üben und habe wieder etwas gehört was mir nicht so sehr gefällt, *Orpheus* für zwei Claviere arrangirt—Es ist mir zu wüst, aber doch hat es eine Form und einen Wunsch von Melodie drinn—Man muss doch gestehen, dass er ein höchst anziehender Mensch ist—Es ist rein unmöglich liebenswürdiger zu sein als er es mit mir ist—Mit mir ist er sehr einfach, was ihm einen doppelten Reiz verleiht, ja sogar kindisch,

pains, and so embraces the opportunity to find rest and relaxation with somebody from his continuous mental tension. It gives me pleasure to see him—but if I could see you again, my dear, good friend, the pleasure would be far greater. . . .

You are quite alone without me, you write—but you are really not without me—my faithfulest friendship is ever hovering around you—oh! I must go on in French, otherwise I shall stick fast—you seem to me in a way like an adoptive child of my heart, for whom I feel, together with the greatest affection, an almost *maternal* solicitude. Yes, hitherto you have led the life of an *orphan*, you have woven yourself a philosophy tinged with bitterness which tends to isolate you more and more, to set you apart from others. What a mistake! you who are so good, and possess every gift of heart and mind, you repress them beneath a sullen disdain of your kind in general and of the Leipzigers in particular, and make yourself unhappy of *set purpose*. That is not right; it is unjust toward others and especially toward yourself, which concerns me infinitely more. I am happy in your letters—they are fraught with treasures of refreshment and affection. Tell me, which is easier for you to understand, French or German? *my German, I hear?* I write more rapidly in French, that goes without saying, but it does not seem natural for me to address you in that language. So, if it does not annoy you, let me write as it comes on the spur of the moment. The worse for the reader, should unknown tongues press to the point of my pen. He will simply have to fight it out with a dictionary. As for your handwriting, it is charming, refined, with a wholly genial physiognomy which pleases me extremely, and which proves that the hand which traced it is not *awkward*—that dear big hand that I warmly press in both of mine. . . .

Tuesday evening.

I am going to tell you something—it is *not entirely impossible* that we may see each other again in a few days.—They are continually pestering me to stay here until the great Court Concert on January 1st.—I have sent my husband a telegram—if he says yes, I shall go over to Leipzig to see you. Is not that well planned? should you be glad? Yes?

Besides, I shall have a most excellent pretext, for the Duke of Altenburg greatly desires to hear me—and then I must pass through Leipzig. Besides the telegram I have written a letter to Louis, and told him that I want to visit you. And I know that he will be glad to hear it—for it gives him pleasure when I choose my friends and love them. You will certainly appreciate him him as an admirable, whole-souled man. He looks very cold, but he is not so. His heart is warm and good, and his mind is far superior to mine. He worships art, and thoroughly appreciates the beautiful and the sublime. His sole fault is that he lacks the childlike element, the impressionable mood. But is not that splendid—to have *only one* fault! Perhaps in his youth he did not even have that one—I did not know him when he was a young man—too bad—I was not born then. If I were not 21 years younger, he would not be 21 years older than I.

I want so much to tell you all sorts of things; where there's a will, there's a way. Meantime, I should like to have the little picture. In Weimar there has been no ray of sunshine. May they all have been gathered on your head!

und ich glaube, dass es kommt natürlich—er hat mich ja seit meiner Kindheit gekannt. . . vielleicht weiss er, dass es eine verlorene Mühe wäre und benutzt der Gelegenheit sich bei jemand von seiner fortwährender geistiger Spannung ausruhen zu können. Ich freue mich ihn zu sehen—wäre es mir doch noch viel lieber Sie mein guter lieber Freund wiederzusehen. . .

Sie sind ganz allein ohne mich, schreiben Sie—aber Sie sind ja nicht ohne mich—meine treueste Freundschaft schwelt fortwährend um Ihnen herum, meine Gedanken haben einen lieben Ruhepunkt bei Ihnen—ach ich muss französisch fortfahren, sonst bleibe ich stecken—vous me faites en quelque sorte l'effet d'un enfant adoptif de mon cœur, pour lequel, à côté de la plus grande tendresse, j'éprouve une sollicitude presque maternelle—Oui, vous avez mené jusqu'à présent une vie d'orphelin, vous vous êtes fait une philosophie tant soit peu amère qui tend à vous isoler de plus en plus, à faire le vide autour de vous. Quelle erreur! vous si bon, vous qui avez en vous toutes les qualités du cœur et de l'esprit, vous les refoulez maussadement au fond du mépris de vos semblables en général et des Leipsicois en particulier, et vous vous rendez malheureux avec obstination. Cela n'est pas bien, c'est de l'injustice envers les autres et surtout envers vous même, ce qui m'importe infinitim plus. Je suis heureuse de vos lettres—elles renferment des trésors de fraîcheur et d'affection. Dites moi, qu'est-ce qui est plus facile à comprendre pour vous, le français ou l'allemand? mon allemand, j'entends? J'écris plus rapidement en français, cela va sans dire, mais il ne me semble pas naturel de m'adresser à vous dans cette langue. Si cela ne vous dérange pas, laissez-moi aussi écrire comme cela me viendra dans le moment. Tant pis pour le lecteur, s'il me vient des langues inconnues au bout de la plume. Il n'aura qu'à s'escrimer avec un dictionnaire. Quant à votre écriture, elle est charmante, fine, et a une physionomie toute spirituelle qui me plait extrêmement et qui prouve que la main qui l'a tracée n'est pas ungeschickt—Ihre grosse liebe Hand die ich in meine beiden Händen herzlich drücke. . . .

#### Dienstag Abend

. . . . Ich will Ihnen Etwas sagen—es ist nicht so ganz unmöglich dass wir uns in diesen Tagen wieder sehen.—Man quält mich fortwährend um bis zum grossen Hof Concert am 1<sup>ten</sup> Januar hier zu bleiben.—Ich habe meinem Mann eine telegraphische Depesche geschickt—wenn er ja sagt, dann gehe ich herüber nach Leipzig um Sie zu sehen.—Ist das nicht gut gedacht? würden Sie sich freuen? Ja?

Ich werde auch den besten Vorwand dazu haben, denn der Herzog von Altenburg wünscht es sehr mich zu hören—da muss ich über Leipzig. Ich habe ausser der Depesche einen Brief an Louis geschrieben und habe ihn gesagt, dass ich Sie besuchen will. Und ich weiss, dass er sich darüber freuen wird—denn er sieht es gerne, dass ich meine Freunde aussuche und lieb habe. Sie müssen ihn kennen lernen, Sie werden ihn gewiss als einen vortrefflichen edlen Mann erkennen. Er sieht sehr kalt aus, ist es aber nicht.—Sein Herz ist warm und gut, und sein Geist ist mir sehr ueberlegen—Er betet die Kunst an, versteht gründlich das schöne, das Erhabne.—Sein einziger Fehler ist dass ihm das kindische Element fehlt, die Frische des Gemüths. Aber ist das nicht prächtig nur einen Fehler zu haben!—Vielleicht hatte er selbst den nicht in seiner Jugend—als junger Mann habe ich ihn nicht gekannt—schade—ich war noch nicht geboren—Wäre ich nicht 21 Jahre jünger, würde er nicht 21 Jahre älter wie ich sein.

Ich möchte Ihnen so gern allerlei erzählen, es wird sich schon finden.—Indessen möchte ich das Bildchen haben.—In Weimar hat die Sonne keine

Then they would shine out upon me from your eyes. How lovely the sun is! You can have no conception of it, for you have never been in my beloved South. There one can never be really too unhappy, too lonely, for that glorious Power absorbs our griefs, brightens all the gloom of the heart, and lures poetry from the soul. One cannot be quite disconsolate in the South, it is too beautiful there. How far away from home have you ever been? Do you love the country, the sunlight, the trees, the sky, the sea, the mountains, the flowers, the wind, the wonderful scents and sounds that surround you of an evening and draw you on and on, far, far away from the dwellings of men, while the lovely blue air whispers all manner of things—and you feel that you are smiling, that you are encircled by the sweetest memories, the dearest friends—yes, then I know surely that I am loved by other souls—then my heart begins to throb, throb, throb, and beats faster and faster and stronger and stronger till I am almost breathless—then I must stop, and press my wild heart fast with both hands—rub my eyes—close my ears tight—Gradually the inner storm calms down—and it was high time—it might have suffocated me—when it is all over one runs home just as fast as one ever can run—exhausted—but one has been happy.—My friend, you do not know what I am talking about—you think I am crazy? Oh, I am *hardly* ever so—Adieu, my good friend—be forbearing toward your loving friend. . . .

Wednesday, 4 o'clock.

Here I am back again from the Altenburg. They are beginning to like me a little there—I go in and out without the least ceremony, just as I please, and their faces really light up with pleasure when I enter the apartments of the Princess.—To-day Count \* \* \* was there, and told us how perfectly *enchanted* the Grand Duke had been with our long conversation of yesterday.—“He was so astonished to find a woman of so much *esprit* in such a great artist,” said the Court Parrot. . . . how stupid these great folk can be, just when they would rather be otherwise. . . .

*Half past 10 o'clock.* The “Barber of Seville” has tweaked the beard of his *confrère* of Bagdad<sup>1</sup>, and made a sensation into the bargain. I was in excellent spirits, and think I sang quite well. The public is not *warm*, it is *fiery*. . . . Liszt is delightful toward me, but all our ideas are too different for us ever to be in complete sympathy—he has not a *friend's nature*, like you, for instance—he cannot attune his life to that of another, or blend his heart with another heart. His personal vanity is far too great for that. He would think it a downfall from his rank as an exceptional man, towering above all others!—I don't wish to speak ill of him, for in spite of all I am very fond of him, and, I repeat, he treats me with much affection—only I believe that the flame in his heart is nothing but a straw-fire—moreover, I find a dreadful lot of ashes in that heart of his—poor devil, I think he is thoroughly *unhappy*. In the depths of his being there is a bitter sadness which excites my pity and augments my affection for him. Sometimes he comes to spend one or two hours quietly with me. That does him a deal of good, so he says—it renews his youth. The life he has led has aged him, outwardly—and that which he leads is totally lacking in tranquillity and refreshment. If I were in his place I should greatly fear that

<sup>1</sup>“Der Barbier von Bagdad,” opera by Peter Cornelius (1824-1874). How the *fiasco* of this master-work on December 15, 1758, was caused by Liszt's enemies at Weimar, is a matter of history.

Strahlen leuchten lassen. Möge Sie sie alle auf Ihrem Kopfe gesammelt haben! Dann würden sie mir in Ihren Augen entgegenstrahlen. Wie schön ist die Sonne! Sie können kein Begriff davon haben, da Sie in meinem lieben Süden nie gewesen sind. Da kann man nie eigentlich zu unglücklich, zu allein sein, denn diese herrliche Macht saugt die Kummer ein, erhellte alle die Dunkel des Herzens und lockt Poesie aus der Seele.—Trostlos kann man im Süden nicht sein, es ist zu schön da. Wie weit sind Sie in Ihrem Leben gereist? Lieben Sie das Land, das Licht, die Bäume, den Himmel, das Meer, die Gebirgen, die Blumen, den Wind, die wunder volle Gerüche und Klänge, die einen umgeben und anziehen am Abend weit, weit von bewohnten Orten, während die schöne blaue Luft in's Ohr Allerlei flüstert—man fühlt, das man lächelt, das man von den liebsten Erinnerungen, von den liebsten Freunden umringt ist—ja, dann weiss ich gewiss, dass ich von andern Seelen geliebt bin—dann fängt das Herz zu klopfen, klopfen, klopfen, und immer schneller und stärker zu klopfen, bis mir der Athem ganz fehlt—ich muss aufhalten, das tolle Herz fest mit beiden Händen drücken—mir die Augen reiben—die Ohren fest zuhalten—Allmählig wird es ruhiger in mir—es war die höchste Zeit—ich hätte ersticken können—wenn es ganz vorüber ist dann rennt man nach Hause so schnell wie man nur rennen kann—erschöpft—aber man ist glücklich gewesen.—Mein Freund, Sie wissen nicht, was ich da sage—ich komme Ihnen verrückt vor? Ach, ich bin es *fast* nie—Adieu mein guter Freund—seien Sie nachsichtig mit Ihrer liebenden Freundinn. . . .

Mittwoch 4 Uhr.

Da bin ich zurück von der *Altenburg*. Man fängt an dort mich ein wenig lieb zu haben—ich gehe in und aus ohne der kleinsten Ceremonie, so viel ich will, u. die Gesichter sehen wirklich vergnügt aus, wenn ich in den Zimmern der Fürstinn trete.—Heute war ein Graf \* \* \* da, der erzählte, dass der Grossherzog so sehr *enchantirt* mit unserer langen Unterredung von gestern war.—“Il a été si étonné de trouver une femme de tant d'esprit dans une si grande artiste” sagte der Hofpapagei. . . wie dumm können diese Herrschaften sein, gerade wenn sie *anders* sein möchten. . . .

$\frac{1}{2}$  11 Uhr.

Der Barbier von Seville a fait *la barbe* à son confrère de Bagdad,<sup>1</sup> et fureur par dessus le marché. J'étais fort bien disposée et je crois avoir assez bien chanté—Le public n'est pas *chaud*, il est *brûlant*. . . .

.... Liszt est charmant pour moi mais toutes nos idées sont trop différentes pour qu'il y ait jamais entre nous une sympathie complète—il n'a pas une *nature d'ami* comme vous par exemple—il ne peut pas s'assimiler une autre vie, ni confondre son cœur avec une autre cœur. Sa vanité personnelle est bien trop grande pour cela. Il croirait déchoir de son rang d'homme exceptionnel et grand par dessus tous!—Je n'en veux pas dire de mal car malgré tout cela je l'aime beaucoup, et je le repète, il est très affectueux avec moi—seulement je crois qu'il ne brûle dans son cœur que de feux de paille—du reste j'y trouve terriblement de cendres dans ce cœur—pauvre diable, je le crois parfaitement *malheureux*. Il y a chez lui un fond de tristesse amère qui me fait pitié et augmente mon affection pour lui—Il vient parfois passer une ou 2 heures tranquillement avec moi. Cela lui fait grand bien, dit-il—cela le rajeunit—La vie qu'il a menée l'a vieilli en dedans—et celle qu'il mène manque entièrement

the Emperor of Russia might consent to his marriage with the Princess, and I think that in his own mind this idea does not wear an especially alluring aspect....

*Thursday, 1 o'clock.* Nevertheless, he is a man of honor and, should the fatal day arrive, he will do his duty bravely. It is more likely that the Princess will not consent to risk losing the power she now has over him as his mistress, by becoming his wife. . . .

However, I want to tell you in a few words about the *soirée* given at the Altenburg in my honor. All the *army* and the *reserves* of the *Future* were present. Everybody was presented to me personally, and I was obliged to make at least 100 courtesies almost in a single breath—the passage in Graun is very much easier, less fatiguing, and above all does not require so long a time. All the longhaired gentry were assembled: "One does not permit one's self to be bald at Weimar," was my first reflection. I was struck by the ugliness of the women.—"Is it a matter of chance? No, it is simpler to suppose it a result of the will," was my second reflection. I conversed a great deal with Mme. Milde, the person who so far pleases me best here. According to expectation, they made me sing. Do you know what made the greatest effect? Guess—my *canya*—and I had not [said] by whom it was—you may [imagine.] knowing the high pitch of exaltation to which the Altenburg is keyed up, the noise that burst out when the name of the author-ess was pronounced—and it was the Princess who guessed it! oh, women are keen!—then I finished with the *Mazurkas*<sup>1</sup>, which made Liszt jump about in his chair—by the way, the chromatic scale in the high octave made a tremendous effect yesterday in the *Barbier*. . . . Now I must break off again; I have to go to the Altenburg—I am invited there every day. But I seem to see clouds in the sky.—The P. acts so very affectedly all the time!—Do not think that I am too *prudish*—no, not that—I understand that a woman can and must sacrifice everything to the man she loves—I can even admire a liaison of that sort, and prefer it infinitely to the hypocritical virtue of an unfaithful wife; but good heavens! I can feel no *sincerity* between L. and the P., for sincerity cannot be otherwise than simple. . . .

Friday the 24th [December, Weimar].

It will soon be 18 years since I was married. I have known Scheffer<sup>2</sup> all that time. I met him at M. Viardot's, who was then the director of the Théâtre Italien. He was presented to me; and, when Louis asked him the question: "How do you find Mlle. Garcia?" Scheffer responded, "Dreadfully ugly; but if I were to see her again, I should fall madly in love with her." It was V. himself who repeated this to me that same evening. Almost immediately he executed the fine portrait which I possess, and, as he then divined, he loved me with all his soul. He has never spoken of it to me, excepting quite recently, when, as he said, there was no longer any danger in my knowing it. Until the end, he was able to assume and sustain the rôle of a father to me—he had gained my entire confidence—he was my refuge. I have had moments of keen anguish in my life; it was he who gave me strength to overcome them, by showing me my art in its most consolatory, most divine aspects. I have felt the discouragements of an artist, a sort of paralysis of all my faculties; and his severe and tender words have, I might say, resuscitated me. I have become wellnigh insane; his

<sup>1</sup>Mme. Viardot's arrangements of Chopin *Mazurkas* as songs.

<sup>2</sup>Of course, Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), the famous Belgian painter.

de calme et de fratcheur. Si j'étais à sa place, j'aurais fort peur que l'Empereur de Russie ne consentit à son mariage avec la Princesse, et je crois qu'à la sienne, cette idée là ne lui sourit pas autre mesure. . .

*Jeudi 1<sup>re</sup>.* Cependant il est homme d'honneur et, *le jour fatal* venu, il fera bravement son devoir. C'est plutôt la Princesse qui ne consentira pas à risquer de perdre, devenant sa femme, l'empire qu'elle a sur lui tant qu'elle est sa maîtresse.

. . . Je veux pourtant vous raconter en quelques mots la *soirée* donnée à la Altenburg en mon honneur. Tout le *ban* et l'*arrière ban* de la *Zukunft* étaient présents. Tout le monde m'a été présenté personnellement et j'ai dû faire au moins 100 réverences presque d'une seule respiration—le trait de Graun est beaucoup plus facile, moins fatigant et surtout dure moins longtemps. Tous les cheveux longs étaient réunis—"on ne se permet pas d'être chauve à Weimar" a été ma première réflexion. J'ai été frappée de la laideur des femmes—"Est ce le fait du hasard? non, il est plus simple que ce soit l'effet de la volonté" a été ma seconde réflexion. J'ai beaucoup causé avec Mme. Milde, la personne qui jusqu'à présent me plait le plus ici. Comme je m'y attendais bien on m'a fait chanter. Savez-vous ce qui a fait le plus d'effet? devinez—ma *caña*—et je n'avais pas [dit] de qui c'était—vous pouvez vous au Diapason très élevé d'exaltation qui donne le ton à la Altenburg le tapage qui a éclaté quand le nom de l'auteur-esse a été prononcé—and c'est la princesse qui l'a deviné! oh les femmes sont fines!—puis j'ai terminé par les *Mazourkas*<sup>1</sup> qui ont fait sauter Liszt sur sa chaise—tiens à propos la gamme chromatique en double octave a fait un effet prodigieux hier dans le *Barbier*. . . .

. . . Für jetzt muss ich wieder aufhören, ich muss auf die Altenburg—ich bin da alle Tage eingeladen. Die Luft ist mir aber nicht rein.—Die Pn. ist so sehr fortwährend affectirt! glauben Sie nicht, dass ich zu *prude* bin—nein das nicht—ich verstehe dass eine Frau alles dem geliebten Mann aufopfern kann u. muss—ich kann sogar ein Liebesverhältniss der Art hochschätzen, und 100 mal der heuchlerischen Tugend einer ungetreuen Gattin vorziehen, aber mein Gott ich spüre keine *Wahrheit* zwischen L. u. die Pn. denn die Wahrheit kann nicht anders als einfach sein. . . .

Vendredi 24 [December—Weimar].

Il y aura bientôt 18 ans que je suis mariée—il y a autant que je connais Scheffer.<sup>2</sup> Je l'ai rencontré chez M<sup>r</sup>. Viardot alors directeur du Théâtre Italien. Il m'a été présenté, et sur la question que lui fit Louis "Comment trouvez vous M<sup>lle</sup>. Garcia?" "Affreusement laide" répondit Scheffer, "mais si je la revoyais j'en deviendrais amoureux fou." C'est V. lui-même qui me rapporta cela le soir même. Il fit presque immédiatement le beau portrait que je possède, et comme il l'avait pressenti, il m'aima de toute son âme. Jamais il ne m'en a parlé, excepté dans les derniers temps, lorsque, disait-il, il n'y avait plus de danger que je le susse. Il a su adopter et conserver jusqu'à la fin le rôle de père avec moi—toute ma confiance lui était acquise—it était mon refuge. J'ai eu des moments de grande douleur dans ma vie, il m'a donné des forces pour les surmonter en me montrant l'art dans son aspect le plus consolant, le plus divin. J'ai eu des découragements d'artiste, des sortes d'anéantissements de toutes mes facultés, et par sa parole sévère et tendre il m'a en quelque sorte ressuscitée. J'ai manqué devenir folle, sa haute raison à remis de l'équilibre dans ma tête

lofty intellect has restored my wavering mental balance. When my suffering was too great for words, it was he who could divine all that filled my wretched heart, which he knew through and through, and who could heal the wound by his tender friendship and his unchangeable and intelligent kindness!

He declared that I gave him youth, vigor, and courage, too! I know not how—and so these eighteen years passed—I adoring him like a daughter, he showing me only the sustaining and ever beneficent love of a father. He died at the age of sixty-three, at the high tide of his ability, in the warm plenitude of his grand intelligence, with the full poetic expression of his affection! . . .

Mme. Viardot returned to Paris on December 26. She allowed but one day to pass before she thanked Rietz for the gift of a portrait-bust which apparently did not meet with her approval. The Bach cantata mentioned is the one known to have been in her autograph collection, and we learn from one of her letters that she owed this treasure to Rietz. For a man to part with such a treasure would seem to be the height of liberality, but in the case of Rietz it was, as the Germans say, a matter of "sich revanchieren." Mme. Viardot made a point of presenting to Rietz, who was somewhat of a bibliophile and collector, with every letter a more or less valuable autograph from her own collection. In one of her letters she regretted casually not to be the lucky owner of an original manuscript of Joh. Seb. Bach. Under the circumstances, then, nothing could have been more natural for Rietz than to search for such a treasure and to present it to his friend as a *quid pro quo*.

28, Rue de Douai, Dec. 27.

. . . The little bust now stands on my table, and gazes on me with its white, blind eyes. The artist who modelled it has given no hint of the man, of the soul, behind those finely moulded features. The reticent, indifferent gaze shows no trace of the kindly expression, so benevolent and intellectual. Your finely sarcastic mouth, with its trace of bitter resignation, the sculptor makes stolid, fleshy—and yet the poor resemblance appeals to me strongly. . . .

The Bach Cantatas have already been played through. How delightful it is that your memory should be indivisibly united with that heavenly aria, "*Beglückte Heerden Jesu Schaafe.*" . . .

. . . How is the opera coming on? If you are going to have it brought out at Weimar, do me the kindness, out of friendship for me, and be just a little nice to Liszt. I assure you that he is infinitely better than his reputation, and his music, too. One ought not to make him responsible for the absurdities that fanatics write and perpetrate. I chatted with him a long time about this matter, and he is *almost* right when he says, "I deplore their stupidities; I am

<sup>1</sup>Bass aria in Bach's cantata "Du Hirte Israel, höre." (The thematic quotation in the next letter is from this aria.) The opera alluded to in the next paragraph is Rietz's "Georg Neumark und die Gambe" (Weimar, 1859).

ébranlée. Quand je souffrais trop pour même le dire, il savait deviner tout ce qui passait dans mon pauvre cœur dont il connaissait tous les replis, et savait guérir la blessure par sa tendre amitié et son inaltérable et intelligente bonté.

Il prétendais que je lui rendais de la jeunesse, de la fraîcheur et du courage aussi! Le comment je l'ignore—et voilà comment ce sont passés ces dix-huit années moi l'adorant comme une fille, lui ne me montrant que l'amour fortifiant et toujours bienfaisant d'un père. Il est mort à 63 ans dans toute la force de son talent, dans la chaude plénitude de sa grande intelligence, dans l'expression la plus poétique de toute sa tendresse! . . .

#### 28 Rue de Douai, 27, 10<sup>bre</sup>.

. . . Die kleine Büste steht jetzt auf meinem Tische, und sieht mich mit den weissen blinden Augen an. Dem Künstler, der sie modellirt hat, haben gar nicht den Mensch, die Seele errathen lassen die hinter den feinen Zügen steckt. Der verschlossene gleichgültige Blick hat nichts von dem lieben Ausdruck so wohlwollend und geistreich. Der Mund, bei Ihnen fein mokant mit einer Mischung von resignirter Bitterkeit, hat der Bildhauer fleischig-dumm gemacht —und doch ist mir die schlechte Ähnlichkeit sehr lieb. . . .

Die Bach'schen Cantaten sind schon durchgespielt worden. Wie schön ist es dass Ihr Andenken unzertrennlich verbunden mit der himmlischen Arie "Beglückte Heerden Jesu Schafe" ist. . .

. . . où en est l'opéra? Si vous allez le faire jouer à Weimar, faites moi le plaisir, par amitié pour moi, d'être un peu gentil avec Liszt. Je vous assure qu'il vaut infinité mieux que sa réputation, et sa musique aussi. Il ne faut pas le rendre responsable des sottises qu'écrivent et font ses fanatiques. J'ai longuement causé avec lui à ce sujet et il a presque raison lorsqu'il dit "Je déplore

the victim of them, and find it unheard-of that they should be laid at my door —yet I cannot deny these young folk, whatever wrong they do me." We parted very good friends. He has been delightful to me, I have again found him wholly the dear Liszt of earlier days. After him, it was long before I could hear any one play the piano. He is always *the colossus*. . . .

December 30th, 1858.

. . . In Paris it is impossible for me to do anything satisfactory—I should have to sing bad music prettily (I hate prettiness in art), and do other things that honorable women ought not to do. Ah, dearest friend, you have no idea of the baseness which rules here now in art and in every sphere of public life—I cannot see it without feeling heavy at heart. Nearly all the women-singers are *courtisanes*. Paris is no place for me.—We live a very quiet life—that suits me exactly. My husband, who is a Republican, as you know, will have nothing to do with the *present régime*, and of course has no intercourse with its leaders. Everything is accomplished now through *protection*, but woe to him who must beg for it! He must usually purchase this needful exalted favor with his honour. God be praised, we do not need it; we have never debased our freedom, soiled our honor. Our honor is free in every aspect, our freedom honorable, and these are our dearest treasures, which we shall defend while reason and affection are ours. And so our threshold is *clean*.

5 o'clock. I am driven home by the rain from a short walk, and wish to profit by the time at my command to add a few words to this letter before dinner. You open your eyes wide! but so it is, and no longer as in Germany—we dine at 6 o'clock. Meantime, here I am in my salon. Louissette is busy opposite me on a bit of work for her grandmother. My husband is reading beside the fireplace, where a good fire of wood and coke is crackling—I name the combustibles to make you understand that the fire is the brightest and warmest that one can have. My back is turned to it, and its reflection falls on my paper. A great lamp with a green shade provides us with light. What an agreeable thing is silence in sympathetic companionship! have you ever tasted its delight? If you were here beside our table (what happiness!) I am sure that you would experience this sweet sensation to the full, perhaps for the first time in your life! There are few more agreeable ones.—What you tell me about your Christmas-tree is charming. We do not have this festival, unless it be out in the country, where the children of the peasants put their sabots under the chimneypiece on Christmas Eve when they go to bed. By morning the Christchild will have placed apples and nuts in them for good children, and rods for naughty children. It is on New Year's Day that presents, *les étrennes*, are made. Formerly, that was the universal custom. Of late years it has greatly fallen off—people give each other only little bags of candy, and kisses, which has always been extremely disagreeable to me.—There appears to be a tremendous revival this year, to judge by the crowds which choke all the shops. In some of them they have had to station *sergents de ville*! With the honest throngs of Paris many thieves contrive to mingle, and pockets run a sad risk of being relieved of their contents. Yesterday I myself had to make several purchases, and came near being crushed. How noisy Paris is after quiet Germany; one is quite bewildered for a few days. But one very soon gets used to that, as to all such matters. . . indifferent, at bottom. Our street is very quiet, and no noise whatever penetrates to my little organ-room. Here is a fairly correct plan of my two salons. . . .

leurs sottises, j'en suis le victime, je trouve inouï que l'on les mette sur mon dos—mais je ne puis renier cette jeunesse quelque tort qu'elle me fasse." Nous nous sommes quittés fort bons amis. Il a été charmant pour moi, j'ai tout à fait retrouvé mon cher Liszt d'autrefois. Je ne pourrai plus de longtemps entendre jouer du piano après lui. Il est toujours *le colosse*. . . .

30/10<sup>bre</sup> 1858.

... In Paris ist es mir unmöglich was Gutes zu leisten—ich müsste schlechte Musik *häbsch* singen (ich hasse das Hübsche in der Kunst), und noch andere Sachen thun die ehrliche Frauen nicht thun sollten. Ach, liebster Freund, Sie haben keinen Begriff von der *Unwürde* die jetzt in der Kunst u. ueberhaupt in dem öffentlichen Leben hier herrscht—ich kann es nicht sehen ohne dass sich mein Herz nicht schwer fühlt. Fast alle Sängerinnen sind *Courtianes*. Paris ist kein Ort für mich—Wir leben ein sehr ruhiges Leben—das ist mir gerade so angenehm. Mein Mann, der bekanntlich ein Republikaner ist, will nichts mit den *jetzigen Herren* zu thun haben, und hat natürlich keinen Verkehr mit ihnen. Alles wird jetzt durch *Protection* gemacht, aber wehe dem, der um sie betteln muss! Mit der Ehre muss er diese nothwendige hohe Gunst gewöhnlich bezahlen—Gott sei Dank, wir brauchen [?] nie haben wir unsere Freiheit entehrt, unsere Ehre angekettet. Frei ist unsere Ehre in jeder Hinsicht, ehrlich unsere Freiheit, und diese sind unsere grössten Schätze die wir vertheidigen werden so lange wir Vernunft und Herz haben. Darum ist unsere Schwelle *rein*.

5 heures. Je suis rentrée d'une petite course chassée par la pluie, et je veux profiter du temps que j'ai devant moi pour ajouter quelques mots à cette lettre avant le diner. Vous ouvrez de grands yeux! mais oui, ce n'est plus comme en Allemagne—nous dinons à 6<sup>hrs</sup>. En attendant me voici dans mon salon. Louise travaille en face de moi à un petit ouvrage pour sa grandmère. Mon mari lit auprès de la cheminée où pétille un bon feu de bois et de coke—je vous nomme les combustibles pour vous faire comprendre que c'est le feu le plus brillant et le plus chaud qu'on puisse avoir. Je lui tourne le dos et j'en ai le reflet sur mon papier. Une grande lampe à abat jour vert nous éclaire. Que le silence en compagnie sympathique est donc une agréable chose! en avez vous jamais gouté? Si vous étiez ici, autour de notre table (quel bonheur!) je suis sûre que vous éprouveriez cette douce sensation au complet pour la première fois de votre vie peut-être! Il y en a peu de plus agréables—Ce que vous me dites de votre arbre de Noël est charmant. Nous n'avons pas cette fête, si ce n'est dans les campagnes, où les enfants des paysans mettent leurs sabots sous la cheminée la veille de Noël en allant se coucher. Le matin le petit Noël a mis dedans des pommes et des noix pour les enfants sages et verges pour les enfants méchants. C'est au jour de l'an que l'on se fait des cadeaux, les *étrences*. Autrefois, c'était une mode générale—Depuis quelques années cela s'était fort calmé—on se bornait à se donner des sacs de bonbons et des *baisers*, ce qui de tout temps m'a été fort déplaisant—Il paraît que c'est une fureur cette année à en juger par la foule qui encombre tous les magasins. Il y en a où l'on est forcé d'avoir des *sergents de ville*! Dans les honnêtes foules de Paris il se glisse beaucoup de voleurs et les poches courrent grand risque d'être débarrassées de leur contenu. J'ai dû moi-même faire plusieurs achats hier et j'ai manquée être écrasée. Que Paris est bruyant après la tranquille Allemagne, on est tout étourdi les premiers jours. Mais on s'y fait bien vite comme à toutes ces choses. . . indifférentes au fond. Notre rue est fort tranquille et aucun bruit ne pénètre dans mon petit salon de l'orgue. Voici un plan approximatif de mes deux salons. . . .

Here Mme. Viardot adds a clever and minute sketch of her apartment with windows, staircase, doors, her "piano Pleyel," her organ, etc., and she does not forget to indicate conspicuously the resting place of the original score of Mozart's "Don Giovanni."

... To-morrow evening Stockhausen<sup>1</sup> is coming to sing Bach with his pupils, members of the society which he founded. They will sing which I love the more, the oftener I think of it. Since my arrival, not a day has gone by without my singing it—your little bust, which stands on the large étagère for music beside the piano, seems by now to wear a smile beneath its white mask. Ah, 'tis because it well knows what thought is inseparable from this adorable air . . . the proud little creature smiles. And the organ, too, has made the house vibrate with the virile inspirations of Bach—do you know that the last part of the Fantaisie, the one that you called crazy, is *magnificent* when it is not played too fast? Try it, and you will see—this bass which continually descends slowly by semitones to the D on which it remains, seems to me like a weary giant falling asleep.<sup>2</sup> What a fine programme Liszt would have given to this piece, supposing that he had been *able* to write it.

And yet, my friend, you are a trifle unjust toward him—he is really not so bad as you make him out—he does nothing low—his fanatics do not always behave as they should, but that is not altogether his fault, although he might and *ought to* exercise his great power over them. It is a pity, a great pity, that he does not do it, but after all that does not make him despicable. Come, come, my friend, be a bit charitable. Why throw the *first stone*? To that you will reply that plenty of others have already struck him. . . let us be generous, and pardon some great failings in consideration of certain good traits. I leave you for this evening—to-morrow I shall continue, and then send off this letter. Good-night, dearest, austere friend.

January 1st, 1859.

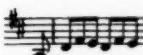
I have come home badly fatigued and with a worse cold—no question that influenza and sore throat are abroad in Paris, but unhappily not in sufficient force to be caught by all the idiots who stick their noses out of doors. I received a few visitors in the morning, and then we all went together to my mother's, who awaited us with wine and cakes, according to her classic custom. Poor mamma, she is in her 78th year, and every time that another year must be added to the date, her brow is covered with clouds, her smile takes on a sadder and sadder tinge, her eyes fill with tears, and each kiss is fraught with a sigh. . . she is afraid of death! ah, my friend, it is a heart-breaking thing to witness this fear, this continual terror of something which, alas, is inevitable, and near at hand for a person of such advanced age.

My mother is a true philosopher in practical matters—all her life she had strength to support the sorest griefs and the heaviest reverses with courage and resignation. The elasticity of her nature is such that her cheery humor has always won the upper hand at last—but for some years she herself has

<sup>1</sup>Julius Stockhausen (1826-1906), one of the greatest singers produced by Germany.

<sup>2</sup>As a matter of fact, the bass part in Bach's "Chromatische Fantasie und Fuge" in D minor—to which Mme. Viardot apparently refers—does not descend slowly by semitones; it remains on D in five of the eight bars in which this downward movement takes place in the upper voices.

... Demain soir Stockhausen<sup>1</sup> viendra chanter du Bach avec ses élèves de la société qu'il a fondée. On chantera que j'aime davantage chaque fois que j'y pense. Depuis mon arrivée il ne s'est passé un seul jour sans que je ne l'aie chanté—votre petit buste qui est sur la grande étagère à musique à côté du piano a fini par sembler sourire sous son masque blanc. Ah, c'est qu'il savait bien quelle est la pensée inséparable de cet air adorable. . . le petit orgueilleux a souri. Oui, l'orgue aussi a déjà fait vibrer la maison des mâles inspirations de Bach—savez vous que la dernière partie de la Fantaisie, celle que vous disiez être *verrückt* est *magnifique* en ne la jouant trop vite. Essayez le, vous verrez—cette basse qui descend toujours, lentement par demi tons jusqu'à ce *ré* qu'elle ne quitte plus, me fait l'effet d'un géant fatigué qui s'endort.<sup>2</sup> Quel beau programme Liszt aurait donné de ce morceau wenn er es hätte überhaupt schreiben können.



Und doch, mein Freund, sind Sie ein bischen ungerecht gegen ihn—es ist wahrhaftig nicht so arg mit ihm wie Sie es machen—er thut ja nichts unedles—seine Fanatiker benehmen sich nicht immer wie sie solten, aber es ist nicht alles seine Schuld, obwohl er könnte und sollte seine grosse Macht über sie üben. Es ist Schade, grosse Schade dass er es nicht thut, aber verächtlich ist er doch nicht dafür—Allons, mon ami, un peu de bienveillance. Pourquoi jeter la première pierre? vous me répondrez à cela qu'il en a déjà reçues bien d'autres. . . soyons généreux, et pardonnons de grands défauts en faveur de quelques bonnes qualités. Je vous quitte pour le soir—demain je continuerai et j'expédiérai cette lettre. Gute Nacht, liebster, strenger Freund.

1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 1859.

Je rentre bien fatiguée et encore plus enrhumée—décidément les rhumes et les maux de gorge courrent dans Paris, malheureusement pas assez fort pour ne pas laisser attraper par tous les imbécils qui mettent le nez dans la rue. Il m'est venue quelque visite dans la matinée, puis nous sommes allés tous ensemble chez ma mère qui nous attendait avec du vin et des gâteaux, selon sa classique habitude. Pauvre maman, elle est dans sa 78<sup>me</sup> année, et chaque fois qu'il faut charger d'un an le millésime, son front se couvre de nuages, son sourire prend une teinte de plus en plus triste, ses yeux se remplissent de larmes, et chaque baiser contient un soupir. . . elle a peur de la mort! ah mon ami, c'est une chose navrante à voir, que cette crainte, cette terreur incessante d'une chose, hélas, inévitable et prochaine chez une personne d'un âge aussi avancé.

Ma mère est bon philosophe dans la vie pratique—elle a toute sa vie durant su supporter les plus grands chagrin comme les plus grands revers avec courage et résignation. L'élasticité de sa nature est telle que son humeur enjouée a toujours fini par reprendre le dessus—mais depuis quelques années

remarked the ravages of time; her sight is failing, her legs sometimes refuse obedience, her memory—formerly marvellous—plays her false at every turn; in a word, she feels the constraint of old age (which she most cordially detested when young), implacable old age, the forerunner of death!

My mother, as you know, is Spanish and (which is of greater significance) was brought up in Spain. It suffices to tell you that she unites a great deal of *Catholic superstition* to a total lack of religion. She is not quite sure that a God exists, but she *would not swear* that there is no Devil, and I grieve to say that from what I can see, this latter gentleman terribly engrosses her attention. A species of Jesuit has found a way to sneak into her home, and nourishes the poor woman's spiritual frailties to his own advantage. With the tact and *courage* which distinguish these good people, when my husband or I enter at one door he slips out at the other. Then my mother is the first to hold him in derision! . . . but the moment she feels a trifle indisposed, her terrors and the priest return, the one bringing the other. I should be very glad if *somebody else* were to carry them all off!

As for my father, he believed in neither God nor Devil—his personal religion was *life* with all its most ardent passions, it was art, it was love. He was handsome, he possessed genius, he had a passion for everything beautiful, and he never gave a thought to what might come after his life so full of sunshine and lightnings. I should like to know how it could happen that a being as calm as I should be the offspring of two such opposite natures! Calm in comparison with them, be it understood—yes, calm and obstinate, or stupid, as you will. For, after all, the somewhat superstitious notions of my mother never gained a hold on me. I was too young when my father died to have been influenced in any way by his purely material ideas, that is true. But how did I come by that innate faith which I have borne within me since earliest childhood—a faith that nothing has ever been able to shake, neither the most skeptical of books nor the ethics of the philosophers? I cannot propound any formula for my faith, but I have the firm conviction that the soul is immortal, and that all loves shall one day be united—the *great loves*, whatever be their nature, provided that they have made themselves worthy of it. Perhaps, in order to reach the goal, one must be put to the test of several existences in the spheres, in worlds ever lovelier and better. Do not laugh at me, dearest friend; I know no more about it than anybody else, and, above all, I cannot give a definite shape to my thoughts on a subject so difficult, so impossible to explain. But all that I do know is this—that there is within us a divine spark which does not perish, and which will end in becoming a part of the great light. Do you believe so, my friend? Oh, try to have confidence and faith like me—you will see how good, how beautiful it is!

*The 2d.* Good-morning, dear friend. Yesterday's autograph is that of Mme. Sand—doubtless you have already guessed it.—The bell is ringing that announces visitors to me—what a bore, to leave you! Patience.

*The 3d.* Another day gone, in which they have left me no time to write you. It began very late for me, because Louis insisted on my staying in bed until 11 o'clock—yesterday I was really coughing too badly—the foggy weather was to blame—it happens *very seldom*, Heaven be praised, that anything is the matter with me, but when it does happen, I have a bad attack. But as I enjoy quite a *healthy health*, it never lasts long—I have never been seriously ill—the only sickness I ever had was the whooping cough, and only ten years ago, in Russia—and so my throat is sometimes affected. As each of us bears within

elle s'apperçoit elle même des ravages du temps—sa vue s'affaiblit, ses jambes lui refusent parfois le service, sa mémoire, autrefois prodigieuse, lui échappe à chaque instant, enfin elle sent l'étreinte de la vieillesse, (ce qu'elle a le plus détesté quand elle était jeune), l'impitoyable vieillesse, précurseur de la mort!

Ma mère est, vous le savez, espagnole, et, ce qui est plus significatif, élevée en Espagne. C'est assez vous dire qu'elle joint beaucoup de *superstition catholique* à un manque total de religion. Elle n'est pas bien sûre qu'il y ait un Dieu, mais elle ne *jurerait pas* qu'il n'y ait pas un Diable, et d'après ce que je vois avec douleur, ce dernier monsieur la préoccupe terriblement. Une espèce de Jésuite a trouvé moyen de se glisser chez elle, et alimente à son propre profit toutes les faiblesses d'esprit de la pauvre femme. Avec le tact et le *courage* qui distinguent ces beaux messieurs, quand mon mari ou moi nous entrons par une porte, il se sauve par l'autre. Alors ma mère est la première à se moquer de lui! . . . mais aussitôt qu'elle se sent un peu indisposée, les terreurs et le prêtre reviennent l'un portant l'autre. Je voudrais bien que *quelqu'un d'autre* les emportât tous!

Quant à mon père, il ne croyait ni à Dieu ni à Diable—sa religion à lui c'était la *vie* avec toutes ses passions les plus ardentes, c'était l'art, c'était l'amour. Il était beau, il avait du génie, il était passionné pour tout ce qui était beau, et il n'a jamais pensé à ce qui viendrait après sa vie si pleine de soleil et de foudres. Je me demande comment il a pu se faire que de ces deux natures si différentes ait pu sortir un être aussi calme que moi! Calme relativement à eux, entendons nous—oui calme et obstine, ou bête, à votre choix. Car enfin, les idées un peu superstitieuses de ma mère n'ont jamais eu prise sur moi. J'étais trop jeune lorsque mon père mourût pour pouvoir être influencée par ses pensées purement matérielles, il est vrai. Mais d'où donc me vient la foi innée que je porte en moi depuis ma plus tendre enfance, foi que rien n'a pu ébranler jamais, ni les livres les plus sceptiques, ni la morale des philosophes? Je ne peux donner aucune formule à ma foi, mais j'ai la ferme conviction que l'âme est immortelle et que tous les amours se trouveront un jour—les *grands amours* de quelque nature qu'ils soient, pourvu qu'ils s'en soient rendus dignes. Pour y parvenir, peut-être faut-il l'épreuve de plusieurs existences dans des sphères, des mondes graduellement plus beaux et meilleurs. Ne vous moquez pas de moi, theuerster Freund, je n'en sais pas plus long qu'un autre, et surtout je ne puis pas donner de forme arrêtée à mes pensées sur un sujet aussi difficile, aussi impossible à expliquer. Mais tout ce que je *sais*, c'est qu'il y a en nous une étincelle divine qui ne périra point et qui finira par faire partie de la grande lumière. Y croyez vous, mon ami? oh tâchez d'avoir comme moi la confiance, la foi—vous verrez comme c'est bon, comme c'est beau!—

*le 2.* Bonjour, cher ami. L'autographe d'hier est de Mme. Sand—vous l'avez sans doute deviné déjà.—On sonne le timbre qui m'annonce des visites —quel ennui de vous quitter! patience.

*le 3.* Wieder ein Tag vorüber, wo man mir keine Zeit gelassen hat Ihnen zu schreiben. Er hat sehr spät für mich angefangen, denn Louis hat mich gezwungen bis 11 Uhr in's Bett zu bleiben—ich hustete gestern gar zu schlimm—das nebligte Wetter war Schuld daran—es geschieht sehr selten, Gott sei Dank, dass mir etwas fehlt, aber wenn es einmal passirt, dann ist es sehr heftig. Aber da ich eine ziemlich gesunde Gesundheit habe dauert es nie lange—ich bin nie förmlich krank gewesen—die einzige Krankheit die ich je gehabt habe, ist Keuchhusten, und erst 10 Jahre her, in Russland—daher ist meine Kehle manch-

himself the seeds of death, I bear mine in me, and they are in my heart, which is too large—don't laugh, it is the literal truth—all the doctors (Dr. Hahnemann among the rest) have told me that I shall die of a rupture of the heart, and that I must guard against all violent emotions, etc.

Stuff and nonsense! one must live one's life, and be afraid of nothing except that which is evil. In any event, do not be anxious, dear friend, I do not suffer in the least—the only thing that annoys me a trifle is the stairs—when I climb them hurriedly, I feel the enemy's presence—or when I happen to be very *nervous* at the beginning of the opera, for instance in the first scene in *Norma*, my heart beats so wildly that I become quite breathlessly excited, as if it were about to burst—that, to be sure, is painful, but as I said it does not last long and seldom occurs. Why have I told you this? I am sorry, for your mind may dwell on it, and it is really nothing, I understand it better than the doctors, who have so often laid their ugly heads against my chest and back so as to discover or invent something unpleasant.

Berlioz came to see me to-day—he is very sick—body and soul are diseased. His wife is really too disagreeable! how could such a man marry such a woman! better to eat raw lemons all day and drink vinegar all night! dreadful!

Yesterday evening I played Liszt's *Orpheus*, *les Préludes*, and *Tasso*, with Luisette. *Orpheus* is the best by far, is it not? true, it sounds a bit airily-empty, but there is much that is pleasing in it—about the others, and especially the last, we had better say nothing. I covered up a certain *bust* with my handkerchief; afterwards, in order to be able to sleep with a clear conscience, we played the C-minor Symphony, and at the glorious *crescendo* in the final movement the ceremonial unveiling took place—and the bust did not look one bit cross because of our having played something by Liszt for it. I don't know whether the *Original* would have been so magnanimous.—So, you really can get angry? I haven't a doubt of it—but only for the first moment—and then lofty intellect immediately asserts itself, and the wrathful mood becomes speechless and powerless;—I do not believe that you are a *disciple* of Talleyrand, who said: "One should distrust his first impulse, for it is almost always good."

No, my friend, I should have neither the courage nor the will to try to tempt Liszt out of his febrile, wretched, empty environment into a higher sphere of existence. I love him very much, and think that he rather likes me, but there is no *true bond of sympathy* between us. Our ways are too divergent—we have met each other, but not *found* each other—that is the difference. . . .

*The 4th. . . .* As I foretold you, my friendship is passionate—and yet tranquil—for that reason it does me so much good. Love kills, when not *allowed* to burst into flame. To *extinguish* it—oh, that is a cruel torture—dolesful, dreadful, deadly. Bereft of sacred friendship, I should have died long ago. By it alone have I been resurrected—like Lazarus. Without it I could not live; it is my salvation, the genial ray of my existence. And so you are now fully aware (are you not?) that a strand of my life is held in your hands. I do not shrink from the *responsibility* of a copartnership in other lives, for I know that I can bestow as much friendship—unwavering, self-sacrificing, unselfish, loyal, untiring friendship—as any human being can feel;—I can love more than I can say. Had I been born in the North, I should be a *phenomenon*—in my Southland the sun is warmer! The strange bringing-up that I had, so far to the north, endowed my romantic heart with stability and constancy—I should like to tell

mal angegriffen. Da ein jeder seinen tödtlichen Keim in sich trägt, so trage ich auch den meinen, und der liegt im Herzen, welches zu gross bei mir ist—lachen Sie nicht, es ist die reine Wahrheit—all Aerzte haben mir prophezeit (Dr. Hahnemann unter andern) dass ich vor Herzbruch sterben werde, und mich von allen heftigen Emotionen hüten muss u. s. w.

Dummes Zeug!—man muss sein Leben leben, und sich vor nichts fürchten, ausser von dem schlechten. Uebrigens ängstigen Sie sich nicht, theurer Freund, ich leide garnicht—das einzige was mich ein Bisschen genirt, sind die Treppen—wenn ich sie schnell hinaufsteige, dann merke ich den Feind—dann wenn ich sehr *nervös* manchmal beim Anfang der Oper bin zum Beispiel im ersten Auftritt in Norma, dann klopft mir das Herz so wild dass ich ganz atemlos aufgeregzt bin als ob es zerspringen wollte—das ist freilich schmerzlich, aber wie gesagt es dauert nicht lange und kommt selten vor. Warum hab ich das gesagt? Es thut mir Leid, denn vielleicht werden Sie darüber grübeln und es ist wahrhaftig Nichts, ich weiss es besser wie die Aerzte, die ihre hässliche Köpfe über meine Brust u. Rücken so oft gelegt haben um irgend was schlechtes zu spüren oder erfinden.

Berlioz war heute bei mir—er ist sehr krank—Leib und Seele sind angegriffen—Seine Frau ist gar zu unangenehm! wie konnte solch ein Mann eine solche Frau heirathen! lieber den ganzen Tag rohe Citronen essen und bei Nacht Essig trinken! schrecklich!

Gestern Abend habe ich mit Luisette *Orpheus, les Préludes* und *Tasso* von Liszt gespielt. *Orpheus* ist das Beste bei weitem, nicht wahr? es klingt zwar ein wenig lustig-leer, aber es hat viel hübsches drin—von den andern besonders von dem letzten wollen wir lieber nicht sprechen. Eine gewisse Büste habe ich mit meinem Taschentuch verdeckt—später, um mit einem reinen Gewissen schlafen zu können, haben wir die C moll Symphonie gespielt, und bei dem glorreichen crescendo im letzten Satz hat die Enthüllung feierlich stattgefunden—und die Büste sah garnicht böse aus dass wir ihr was von Liszt vorgespielt hatten. Ich weiss nicht ob der *Original* so grossmuthig gewesen wäre—Also grimmig können Sie sein? ich glaube es gern... aber nur in dem ersten Augenblick... und gleich nachher tritt die hohe Vernunft ein, und der Grimm wird stumm und machtlos—ich glaube nicht dass Sie ein *Disciple* von Talleyrand sind der sagte: "Il faut se méfier de son premier mouvement car il est presque toujours bon."

Nein, mein Freund, ich hätte weder Muth noch Wille den Versuch zu machen, Liszt aus seinem berauschten jammervollen leeren Lager in einem höheren Leben zu locken. Ich liebe ihn sehr, ich glaube er mag mich auch ein wenig, aber die *rechte Sympathie* existirt nicht zwischen uns. Unsere Wege sind zu entgegengesetzt—wir haben uns begegnet, nicht *gefunden*—das ist der Unterschied...

den 4<sup>ten</sup>... Ich habe es Ihnen vorausgesagt, meine Freundschaft ist leidenschaftlich—und doch ruhig—darum ist sie mir so wohlthuend. Die Liebe tödtet, wo sie nicht auflammen darf. Sie *auszulöschen*, ach, das ist eine grausame Qual—schmerzlich, schrecklich, tödtlich. Ohne die heilige Freundschaft wäre ich längst gestorben. Durch sie allein bin ich wie Lazarus auferstanden—ohne sie könnte ich nicht leben, sie ist mein Heil, der wärmende Strahl meines Daseins. Also nicht wahr, Sie wissen jetzt ganz bestimmt, dass ein Theil meines Lebens in Ihren Händen liegt. Ich fürchte mich nicht vor der *responsabilité* auch andere Leben zu besitzen, denn das *weiss ich*, ich kann so viel Freundschaft, beständige, aufopfernde, uneigennützige, strenge, unermüdliche Freundschaft geben wie ein Mensch nur fühlen kann—unaussprechlich kann ich lieben. Wenn ich im Norden geboren wäre, wäre ich ein *Phänomen*—in meinem Süden

you something, but I am afraid that you do not yet know me well enough to hear it without prejudice. Do not be alarmed—it is nothing *bad*, it is only characteristic, and might possibly help you to understand much in me which may sometimes appear inexplicable. Shall I tell you? . . . no, not to-day; and yet. . . how I should like to—well, read over the first part of *Consuelo*; I shall see if you can discover the other similarity with me.

*3 o'clock.* Lewes<sup>1</sup> is open before me and my eyes fall by chance on this anti-Weimarian phrase: "Art is nothing but putting into shape!" This is, after all, not entirely correct, for the part done by the Lord seems too small from this angle of vision. Genius is not to be confined within a ready-made mould; it is a giant who cannot don the habiliments of a man of ordinary stature. He *must* be clad, I admit, according to the conventions of our civilization, but it is not indispensable that his costume should follow the prevailing fashion. All the dimensions being different, one may surely leave him the choice of material and form. To begin with, he will not let himself be clothed otherwise than suits his taste.—What a delightful metaphor! don't you find it quite worthy of Homer?—You will reply that fools, too, dress themselves to their liking, and by no means prove their genius by doing so.

By the way, have I ever told you that Homer is my passion? for me there is nothing more beautiful in the world—that, together with the *bas reliefs* of the Parthenon. It seems to me that there is no work in music which might be termed equivalent to those—a work which is the ideal expression of an entire people. Even painting seems inferior to me. Mozart, Raphael, these two divine artists, appear less colossal than Homer and Phidias. I tremble, lest you treat me as a heretic—so much the worse, I tell you what I think, ready for discussion with you to your heart's content. I love discussions, for they generally serve to fortify each *discusser* in *his own* opinion.

My children know Homer as other children know fairy tales and the stories of the Arabian Nights. Louisette knows the most inconsiderable episodes of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* by heart—she has the German translations by Jacobi, and Monje. Didie has named her wooden horse Balios! Isn't that delightful?

The long letter continues with friendly and tactful criticism of some unmelodic phrases in "Neumark," the opera which Rietz was just then composing and which was first performed at Weimar in 1859. The letter ends with an allusion to her approaching tour through England.

The next letter, the fourth of the autograph series of this year, is dated January 6. A remark of Rietz about the fifth symphony of Beethoven leads her to exclaim:

That is true, it all sounds so simply beautiful, so colourless in detail by reason of its simplicity, and so marvellously rounded and harmonious as a whole. It attempts no *pretty* effects (heaven be praised!), and so the lovely, reposeful euphony sinks down, down into the soul until the listener is quite overpowered by its charm. Great is the power of our divine art, and happy is he who can

<sup>1</sup>G. H. Lewes's "The Life of Goethe" (1855).

ist die Sonne wärmer! Die seltsame Erziehung die ich gehabt habe, ganz nördlich, hat Festigkeit und Ausdauer meinem schwungvollen Herz gegeben—ich möchte Ihnen etwas sagen, aber ich fürchte dass Sie mich noch nicht gut genug kennen um es ohne Vorurtheil zu hören. Fürchten Sie sich nicht—es ist nichts böses, es ist nur charakteristisch und würde vielleicht helfen manches in mir zu verstehen was Ihnen zuweilen unbegreiflich vorkommen mag. Soll ich's sagen? . . . nein, heute nicht und doch. . . es machte mir Spass. . . lesen Sie noch einmal den ersten Theil *Consuslo*—ich will sehen ob Sie die andere Ähnlichkeit mit mir finden.

*3 Uhr.* Lewes<sup>1</sup> est ouvert devant moi et mes yeux tombent par hasard sur cette phrase anti Weimarienne "Die Kunst ist Nichts als Gestaltung!" Ceci n'est pas non plus tout à fait juste, car la part fa'te [!] bon Dieu est trop petite dans cette manière de voir. Le génie ne peut pas contenir dans une forme toute faite déjà, c'est un géant qui ne peut entrer dans les vêtemens d'un homme de taille ordinaire. Il faut qu'il soit habillé, j'en conviens, d'après les règles de notre civilisation, mais il n'est pas indispensable que son costume soit à lui [?] de tout le monde. Puisque toutes les dimensions sont autres on peut bien lui laisser le choix de l'étoffe et de la forme. D'abord il ne se laissera pas habiller autrement qu'à son goût.—Quelle jolie comparaison, elle est digne d'Homère, ne trouvez vous pas?—vous me direz que les fous aussi s'habillent à leur goût et qu'ils n'en ont pas plus de génie pour cela—

A propos, vous ai-je jamais dit que Homère est ma passion? je trouve qu'il n'y a rien au monde de plus beau—cela avec les pas [!] reliefs du Parthénon. Il me semble qu'il n'y a pas en musique une œuvre qui soit l'équivalent de celles-là—une œuvre qui soit l'expression idéale de tout un peuple. La peinture même me semble inférieure. Mozart, Raphaël, ces deux divins artistes, me paraissent moins immenses que Homère et Phidias. Je tremble que vous ne me traitiez d'hérétique—tant pis, je vous dis ce que je pense, quitte à discuter avec vous tant que vous voudrez. J'aime les discussions parcequ'en général elles servent à fortifier chaque *discuteur* dans sa propre opinion.

Mes enfants savent Homère comme d'autres enfants savent des contes de fées et les histoires de Mille et une nuit. Louisette kennt auswendig die kleinsten Episoden der Odyssaea u. Ilias—sie hat die deutsche Übersetzungen von Jacobi, und Monjé. Didie hat ihr hölzernes Pferd Balios genannt! ist das nicht schön?...

Es ist wahr, es klingt alles so einfach schön, so effektlos im Einzelnen wegen der Einfachheit, und so wundervoll rund und harmonisch im Ganzen. Er sucht keine hübsche Effecte, Gott sei Dank, darum dringt die schöne, wohl-

wholly surrender himself thereto! But, like the God of the Bible, it is a jealous god, who straightway forsakes and chastises the transgressor who neglects him to run after strange gods.

I mean *idols*: is the word *Abbott* correct?

This uncertainty prompts her to remark:

. . . However you may assure me that you understand everything in French, I always find it irksome to address you in that language. It always seems to me that I am not writing absolutely to you when I employ anything but your own language. For we have never spoken French together. To me you are a perfect type of the real German artist—so good, so noble, so childlike, and oh, so *ungainly* through and through! And just all that suits me so well—and the French language is not at all in keeping with it. You must have patience with my *salad* of tongues—I do the best I can—and am not attempting literary composition.

Her remark about Rietz's awkwardness must have worried her, for she hastens to add at eleven P. M., as a kind of antidote, some similar observations on her friend the great historian Henri Martin, whom she calls "physically the most awkward human being in all Creation," "who never knows what to do with his big hands and who has not yet learned how to shake hands properly, though I have given him lessons in that respect for the last fifteen years."

The continuation of the letter on January seventh is interesting for Mme. Viardot's opinion of her existing portraits and for her remarks about Julius Stockhausen's Bach choir:

I am vexed that there is no really good portrait of myself. The best of any is the one by Lallemand. To be sure, I have the steel engraving after the great oil painting by Ary Scheffer, but it is not well done (the steel engraving. Some time or other you will get it, to keep company in the portfolio with that of Norma, which, after all, is not so bad as it pleases you to say). In the lithograph by Lallemand I find an air of abstracted contemplation which displeases me. Some day, if I happen to be in the vein for drawing, I shall try to make a little sketch, which I shall send you in a letter'. . . .

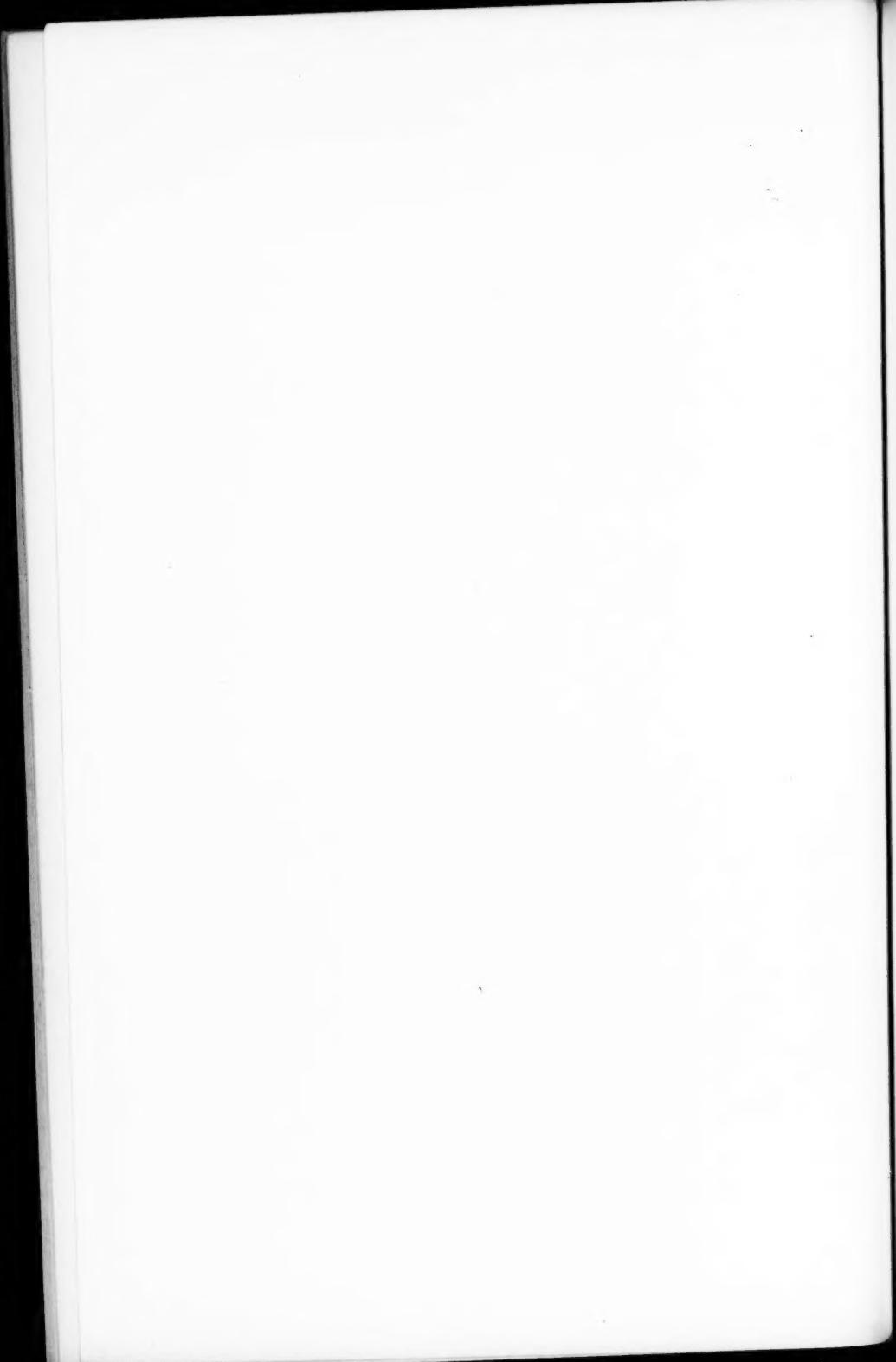
Stockhausen told me recently that he intends to go to Leipzig in February. His Bachgesellschaft, very good for Paris, would be positively wretched for any German city. It comprises some fifty voices, almost all of which are poor, except about a dozen that belong to German throats. He takes extraordinary pains merely to attain the result that they sing true and in time. As for shading and delicacy, that is and always will be out of the question. I fear that S. will ruin his voice in the insane attempt to make the Parisians musical. At every rest he has to scream "*1, 2, 3, à nous!*" . . .

Did Mme. Viardot have occasion to greatly modify her views in later years? At any rate, Paris has never been famous for

<sup>1</sup>This she did on April 23d with the remark "Ce petit portrait n'est presque pas ressemblant—jetez le au feu." Unfortunately her color scheme defied reproduction.



Mme. Viardot-Garcia's  
"Self-portrait," 1859



klingende Ruhe tief und tiefer in die Seele hinein, bis der Zuhörer ganz wonniglich bezaubert wird. Gross ist die Macht unserer göttlichen Kunst, und glücklich der, der sich ihr ganz hingeben kann. Sie ist aber wie der Gott der Bibel ein eifersüchtiger Gott, und verlässt, und bestraft sogleich den Frevler der sie vernachlässigt für einen andern Abgott.

Je veux dire *idoles*, ist das Wort Abgott richtig?

. . . bien que vous m'assuriez que vous comprenez tout en français, cette langue me gêne en m'adressant à vous. Il me semble toujours que ce n'est pas tout à fait à vous que j'écris quand j'emploie autre chose que votre propre langue. Wir haben ja nie französisch zusammen gesprochen. Mir sind Sie ja ein wahrer Typus eines echt deutschen Künstlers—so gut, so edel, so kindisch und ach, so durch und durch *ungeschickt!* Gerade das alles gefällt mir so sehr—and die französische Sprache passt gar nicht dazu. Sie müssen Geduld mit meinem *Salat* von Sprachen haben—ich helfe mich wie ich kann—et ne cherche pas à faire de la littérature.

Ich ärgere mich, dass es kein wirklich gutes Portrait von mir giebt. Das Beste ist noch das von Lallemand. Wohl habe ich den Stahlstich von dem grossen Oehlbild von Ary Scheffer, es ist aber nicht gut gelungen (der Stahlstich). Sie werden es doch einmal bekommen, pour tenir compagnie dans le carton à celui de Norma, qui n'est pourtant pas si mauvais que vous voulez bien le dire. Je trouve dans la lithographie de Lallemand un air d'observation distraite qui me déplaît. . . Si un jour je me trouve en bonne veine de dessiner, j'essaierai de faire un petit croquis que je vous enverrai dans une lettre! . . .

Stockhausen hat mir neulich gesagt er beabsichtige in Februar nach Leipzig zu gehen. Seine Bachgesellschaft, sehr gut für Paris, wäre ganz miserabel für irgend eine deutsche Stadt. Er hat einige 50 Stimmen die fast alle schlecht sind, ausser ungefähr ein Dutzend die deutschen Kehlen gehören. Er giebt sich ausserordentliche Mühe um den einfachen Zweck zu erreichen dass man rein und im Takt singe. Von *Nüancierung* und Feinheit kann nicht, wird nie die Rede sein. Ich fürchte S. verdirt seine Stimme in dem verrückten Versuch die Pariser musikalisch zu machen. Er muss bei jeder Pause 1, 2, 3 à nous! ausschreien. . .

choral societies. It is a puzzle for students of race psychology to solve why choral music flourishes quite naturally in some countries and in others not at all.

*9th, 5:30.* Good-evening, dear friend. Yesterday I had not a moment to spare for writing. I was away from home nearly all day, and at 6 o'clock we dined at Rossini's. He always has a diabolical wit. His wife told us how they had received that morning the visit of a lady who lamented that she had eaten onions. "What must one do, maestro, maestro, to rid one's self of that intolerable taste?" she asked Rossini. "Eat garlic!" he answered. The other evening a pianist and a violinist were deciphering a piece of Rossini's, written very recently. Each went his own way, without rhythm and without measure. Carafa said to him, "But, mio caro, do tell them to play together!" The maestro very placidly responded, "Mon cher, I have always loved liberty!"

At dinner there was a Belgian painter of some talent, Wappers, and the indispensable Carafa, whom you also doubtless know by name. He has composed some operas<sup>1</sup>, which he has survived. Although he was an old friend of my father's, I never could bear him. In youth he was a libertine—at present he is sixty-three, and is an old libertine, that is all the difference. Peugh!

In the evening a great many people came—a very mixed company—some of our friends, too, such as Reber, M. Crémieux (the lawyer), M. Legouvé, the author—then a crowd of dreadful little tuppenny musicians. Rosenhain played three Bagatelles after his fashion—then a deformed young person meowed "Voi che sapete"; after that—the mere thought makes me blush with indignation—a bad singer of comic chansonettes regaled us with the Lord knows what disgusting platitudes, intended to excite laughter. Yes, my friend, just imagine that in Paris there are people who have no other trade, who are paid for that, and who often win a larger audience and greater applause than serious artists. I felt affronted at meeting and hearing a creature like that at Rossini's! Mind you, while I was almost in tears with vexation, they were laughing and applauding frantically. Ah, it is hardly necessary to say that I felt outraged—I could not stand it any longer, and departed, so as not to witness further such an abasement of art. As for Rossini, this sort of magic lantern, all this crowd that passes through his salons as through a street, amuses him. It is my private opinion that he laughs to himself at everybody and everything—there are but very few people whom he regards with some little affection; I flatter myself that I am one;—he greatly liked my father, for whom he wrote several of his principal operas, the *Barbier*, *Otello*, *Donna del Lago*, etc.—and having known me since my childhood (he called me his "prima donna in erba" when I was eight), he has transferred to me a portion of that affection which dates from his dearest memories of youth. I never see him kiss any one except myself. To-morrow, or later, he wants to come to hear my organ. What shall I play for him? Bach, no doubt. But no, I think I shall do better to let him play himself; that will amuse him much better—and me, too. . . .

The rest of the letter is taken up by a minute schedule of her approaching concert tour through Great Britain and Ireland, from January to March. It has all the ear-marks of the "one-

<sup>1</sup>Some operas? Michele Enrico Carafa de Colobrano (1787-1872) composed 36 operas, not to mention his other *baggage*.

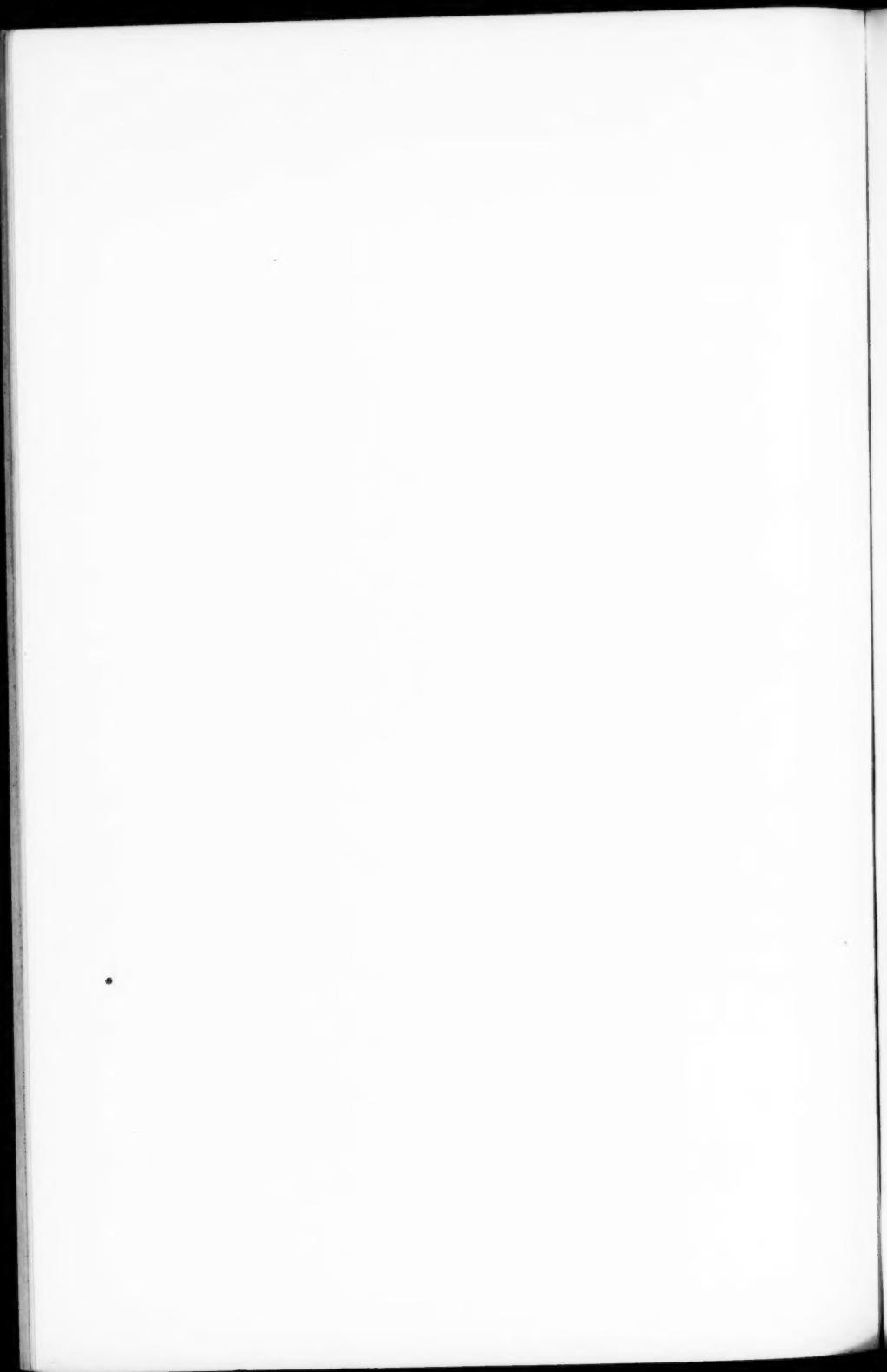


PAULINE VIARDOT-GARCIA

† 18. Mai 1910

Nach einer Lithographie von Ludwig Pietsch

As "Norma," 1858



gten ½ 6. Guten Abend, lieber Freund. Gestern habe ich keine Minute Zeit gehabt zum schreiben. Ich bin fast den ganzen Tag ausgeblieben, und um 6 Uhr haben wir bei Rossini dinirt. Il a toujours de l'esprit comme un diable. Sa femme a raconté que le matin ils avaient reçu la visite d'une dame qui se plaignait d'avoir mangé de l'ognon. "Que faut-il faire, maestro, maestro, pour en faire passer l'insupportable goût?" demanda-t-elle à Rossini. "Mangez de l'ail" répondit-il. L'autre soir, un pianiste et un violoniste déchiffraient un morceau de Rossini, écrit tout dernièrement. Chacun allait à son côté, sans rythme et sans mesure. Carafa lui dit "mais, mio caro, dis leur donc d'aller ensemble." Le maestro sans s'émouvoir répond "mon cher, j'ai toujours aimé la liberté."

Il y avait à dîner un peintre belge de quelque talent, Wappers et l'indispensable Carafa dont le nom vous est aussi sans doute connu. Il a composé quelques opéras<sup>1</sup> auxquels il survit. Quoiqu'il fût un ancien ami de mon père je n'ai jamais pu le souffrir. C'était un libertin dans sa jeunesse—à présent il a 63 ans et c'est un vieux libertin, voilà toute la différence. Pouch!

Le soir il est venu beaucoup de monde—une société bien mêlée—Quelques uns de nos amis, aussi, comme Reber, M<sup>r</sup>. Crémieux (l'avocat) M<sup>r</sup>. Legouvé l'auteur—puis une masse de méchants petits Musikanter de quatre sous. Rosenhain a joué trois *Bagatelles* de sa façon—puis une demoiselle contrefaite à miaulé "*Voi che sapete*," puis. . . je rougis d'indignation rien que d'y penser, un mauvais chanteur de chansonnettes comiques nous a débité Dieu sait quelles dégoûtantes platitudes, soi-disant pour faire rire. Oui, mon ami, figurez vous qu'il y a à Paris des gens qui ne font pas d'autre métier, qui sont payés pour cela, et qui ont souvent plus de besogne de public et des applaudissements que des artistes sérieux. J'étais indignée de rencontrer d'entendre un être comme ça chez Rossini! Eh, bien, tandis que j'en aurais presque pleuré de vexation on a ri, on a applaudi à outrance. Ah c'est bien le cas de le dire, j'étais outrée—aussi n'ai je plus pu y tenir, je suis partie, pour ne plus être témoin d'un tel avilissement de l'art. Quant à Rossini, cette espèce de lanterne magique, toute cette foule qui passe à travers ses salons comme dans la rue, l'amuse. Je pense bien qu'intérieurement il se moque de tout et de tous—it n'y a que très peu de gens pour qui il ait un peu d'affection—je me flatte d'en faire partie—il aimait beaucoup mon père, pour qui il a écrit plusieurs de ses principaux opéras, le *Barbier*, *Otello*, *Donna del Lago*, etc.—et m'ayant connue depuis mon enfance (il m'appelait *sa prima donna in erba* quand j'avais 8 ans) il a reporté sur moi une partie de cette affection qui remonte à ses plus beaux souvenirs de jeunesse. Je ne lui vois jamais embrasser personne excepté moi. Demain ou après, il veut venir entendre mon orgue. Que lui jouerai-je? du Bach sans doute. Mais j'y pense, je ferai mieux, je le ferai jouer lui-même, cela l'amusera bien plus et à moi aussi. . .

"night-stand" campaigns of European virtuosos in our own country; and with a change of *locale* many of these, I fancy, have felt as did Mme. Viardot when she wrote:

You see, my friend, that I have a great task before me—not a very pleasant one, either—in England I like exceedingly to sing on the stage—that always animates me and interests me. But, except in the Gewandhaus, I hate concerts—and especially in England! good gracious, how can one call that *faire de l'art!*—I call it *faire de l'art . . . gent!*

Sie sehen mein Freund, dass ich eine grosse Arbeit vor mir habe—u. auch keine angenehme—in England singe ich sehr gern auf der Bühne—das regt mich auf, interessiert mich immer. Aber ausser im *Gewandhaus* hasse ich Concerten—und besonders in England! ach du lieber Gott, wenn man das *faire de l'art* nennen soll! . . . Das nenne ich *faire de l'art . . . gent!*

(*To be continued*)

## ON THE CULT OF WRONG NOTES

By FREDERICK CORDER

I ORIGINALLY intended to devote this paper to an examination of the curious fact that the progress of our art has always been owing to the unmusical rather than to the musical—not the anti-musical, but those who are stronger on the intellectual than on the æsthetic side. But on second thoughts I prefer to let the reader develop this thesis for himself if he finds it acceptable, for there is little use in forcing unwelcome truths down people's throats; and there are plenty of more welcome ones to discuss, anyway.

Has it occurred to any one that the art of musical composition has during the last ten or fifteen years shown signs of decay? Or if not of decay, then of getting into a condition which is fast putting it out of reach of ordinary human sympathies? I fear there can be little doubt of it, and a brief survey of the progress of music during the nineteenth century will reveal some startling facts. Taking Germany first, the following is a list of the chief shining lights: Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, Richard Strauss, and a welter of undistinguished persons. Taking France next, we have: Auber (one ignores Meyerbeer), Berlioz, Gounod, Bizet, St. Saëns, Vincent d'Indy and the crazy crowd of whom Claude Debussy is the chief. In Russia the semi-French school of Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky, Borodin and Tanéiew has been followed by Rimsky-Korsakow and Stravinski, not to mention the unhappy Scriabine. In England, finally, our dull time in which Bennett and Macfarren afforded a feeble illumination was followed by the generation which included Parry, Mackenzie, Stanford, Cowen and myself. One cannot say we flourished, but we were graciously endured for a while, till Holbrooke, Cyril Scott and a raw band of amateurs found more favor in the eyes of the critics. One should not forget, moreover, that the nineteenth century critics, such as Davison, Chorley, Gruneisen, Hueffer and Bennett, were men of some slight technical knowledge, if of violent prejudices: their twentieth century followers, on the other hand, are young journalists, possibly intelligent, but in no sense musical, whose one idea is that all foreign music and musicians must necessarily be worthy

of respect. The consequence of this is that, during the period I have named, there has been a most unhealthy boom in freak-music—in whatever is extravagant and startling.

Freak-music began about the middle of the nineteenth century. It has always been the product of the unmusical musician. It may be news to some of my readers that fully half the persons who attempt to cultivate the art of music do so in the first instance without any reference to the sense of hearing, yet such is the fact. And strangely enough, as I began by stating, these non-hearing musicians are the men to whom all art-progress is due: Schumann, Auber, Henry Bishop—all these simply emptied out their sack; it is to Wagner, St. Saëns, Purcell that you must look for new paths. Such men always evoked bitter hostility in the minds of the early critics; this was only natural. But as time went on the number of those who wrote collections of sounds into which they read poetry, pictures, psychology—anything rather than music—increased. This was really because they gave the critics something to talk about and this acted as an advertisement. What can you say of a beautiful piece of music more than that it reminds you of so-and-so (the latest great man)? Whereas it is easy to fill half a column with speculations as to the inner meaning of compositions of the "A fool is bent upon a twig, but wise men dread a bandit" sort. Macfarren confessed to me that he had to write a long article in *The Musical World* upon H. H. Pierson's oratorio *Jerusalem*, in which he failed to discern one glimmering of sense. Yet Pierson was by way of being a great man in his day. I myself had to write a notice of Liszt's *Hamlet* under similar circumstances.

Just at the end of the nineteenth century, when Richard Wagner had revenged himself upon the press of the world by becoming thoroughly popular, Richard Strauss came to the fore. The verdict of musicians upon him was that he was a kind of German Berlioz, a brilliantly clever man without any ear. But the critics were in such mortal dread of repeating their predecessors' blunder over Wagner that they boomed him and insisted that all his lapses and crudities were just what the world was waiting for. Do I garble the facts, or would you like chapter and verse?

The first London performance of Richard Strauss's *Thus spake Zarathustra* was given by the famous Amsterdam orchestra under Mengelberg. In the opening a grandiose chord of C is built up gradually, ceasing suddenly at the twenty-first bar and leaving only the organ sounding. Behold! the organ was discovered thundering out a chord of D major at full blast. I was informed afterwards that there was a transposing keyboard to this instru-

ment, and one of the band, out of sheer mischief, had turned the key just before the concert. The conductor nearly fainted, but not a soul in the audience, except a very few who knew the piece, turned a hair! After this, the eccentric ending seemed nothing, but a blind pupil of mine asked me innocently why the basses played it *a semitone sharp*; when I explained that it was written so, he said, "Oh, that accounts for that funny chord in the opening!" When I further explained that this was a mistake, he said, "But how is one to know, then?"

Yet another example: when *Elektra* was in rehearsal with Beecham, one of the viola players brought me his part and asked what he had better do with a passage that ran down to bass C flat, there being no such note on the instrument. With some trouble I found a way in which the passage might be altered, but on enquiring afterwards, the player said "Oh, it was too much trouble to alter it in all the parts so we played C natural instead, *and it sounded all right.*" The point of this story lies in the fact that all the strings were in unison and *fortissimo*. When I myself heard the opera I was fain to agree with the viola player. What kind of music can that be, I ask, where such an alteration can make no difference?

Strauss, in fact, pursued to its extremity Beethoven's discovery (in his deaf days) that absolutely wrong notes can often be written with impunity for the orchestra. In the general flood of sound the effect is analogous to the misuse of the sustaining pedal by an excited pianist. It is indeed difficult to make an orchestra sound bad, whatever you write. This explains why the orchestration of a new piece is the one point a critic can safely praise. The cult of wrong notes now rapidly became a fashion: Mahler, Schillings and all the small Germans pursued the new path with enthusiasm. Strauss, too, had, of course, to see himself and go one better every time, till there was only one thing more left to do and that was to write a piece that should consist entirely of wrong notes, an idea that might have occurred to any one. To Arnold Schönberg belongs the proud distinction of having accomplished this feat.<sup>1</sup>

When the Schönberg pieces first appeared I derided them in the musical journals, giving quotations to prove my words. Everybody went into fits of laughter over their absurdity, but I found, to my surprise, that no one would believe that they were genuine samples: people thought that I was pulling their leg and

<sup>1</sup>It will interest the author as it will his readers to know that Dr. Egon Wellesz of Vienna has agreed to contribute an article on "Schönberg and Beyond."—Ed.

had invented the whole thing as a skit. How much greater, then, was my surprise when a critic told the public that I was a mere pedant and "academic," and that these silly things were masterpieces of art! And a well-known pianist actually performed them in public, amid the irrepressible sniggering of musicians but the profoundest interest of the bulk of his audience! I attempted to have my revenge by printing another effusion of Schönberg's both right way up and upside down, defying any one to tell me which was right. No one succeeded, but this only served to enhance Schönberg's fame and my own unpopularity.

The next step was that the critics took up the attitude that whatever was difficult to understand, or even incomprehensible, was *ipso facto* admirable. In the number of our leading musical monthly for April, 1914, there were four successive articles, covering twenty-five columns, all written by well-known people and all gravely discussing Scriabine's "Poem of Fire" and Schönberg's productions, all of which were supposed to illustrate "modern tendencies." It would have been useless at the time for any musician to point out that Scriabine's work was the product of a once fine composer suffering from mental derangement, and that Schönberg's lucubrations were simply nothing at all; you could not expect either a journalist or his public to see any difference between a lunatic and an idiot; but now that the entire public has plunged into a hysterical fit of hatred for everything German, one can speak the truth without fear of giving these things their desired advertisement. Finding the production of sheer nonsense both easy and profitable, Schönberg actually had followers in the persons of Bela Bartók and Leo Ornstein. The whole thing was an inevitable sequence, but, thank Heaven! it had soon to come to an end. The French "modern" music without any recognizable harmony but augmented triads, was bad enough in all conscience and exercised a most pernicious influence on many poor English strugglers who would fain be in the movement; but the productions of Ornstein and Bartók were mere ordure; it was impossible for a musical person to tolerate, much less pretend to admire them, yet in the columns of a leading London paper appeared a lengthy notice of some pieces by this last named freak-composer, from which I will quote a few sentences:

It is, however, in the two Elegies and the tragic Marche Funèbre that Bartók arrives at his most subtle expression in pianoforte composition. The tragic intensity of the Elegies places them above the limitations of their technical structure and gives them a significance which is truly epic in spirit. . . . The Marche Funèbre is scarcely so much a

lamentation as a passionate protest against death and an apotheosis of that heroic spirit which transcends death by the perpetuation of achievement in the minds of collective humanity.

If, impressed by this and much more of the same sort of soulful utterance, the reader were so rash as to purchase any of Mr. Bela Bartók's compositions, he would find that they each and all consist of unmeaning bunches of notes, apparently representing the composer promenading the keyboard in his boots. Some can be played better with the elbows, others with the flat of the hand, none require fingers to perform nor ears to listen to. Yet you have to face the fact that audiences have sat, for the most part unmoved, while some one has gravely played the piano to them like a two-year old child. That men professing to be musical critics, while unable to compass the hypocrisy of pretending to comprehend this rubbish, have yet had the effrontery to encourage it, seems to me a shameful thing.

One can forgive people for believing that when an artist like Scriabine suffers from mental derangement his music becomes more admirable, though it is not really true and cannot be, but to pretend that the clotted nonsense of Schönberg and Bartók *must* mean something merely because it is printed in Germany is an insult to humanity. Still I want to know what kind of minds those people have for whom it is sufficient that a decently informed person shall remonstrate against an absurdity to set them earnestly and wholeheartedly admiring it. Heaven pardon me for saying it, but it almost reconciles one to the awful catastrophe of this European war to think that it will at least sweep away these cobwebs from people's brains, whatever others may take their place. The pretense that art has said its last word and that chaos must supersede it is as untrue with regard to music as with regard to painting. To pretend, as do the scribes, that any of the "Futurists" in any branch of art are men who have gone through all that is possible to be known and come out on the other side, simply proves that neither these men nor their admirers have any conception of what art means. But while the craze lasted I was appalled to discover how unmusical the unmusical could be.

Well, I fancy there is going to be a change. During the anxieties and terrors of war it is only natural that the graces of life, the arts, be temporarily thrust into the background. But when they re-emerge I think we shall blow the dust and cobwebs off them and to a certain extent start fresh. That all countries will ignore their decadents and evolve a robuster school of composers, more worthy of great nations who have come through

a terrible experience, this we have reason to hope. But what of England in particular? Will the removal of the overpowering influence of foreign music encourage a native crop to spring up? Will the dawn of universal peace and goodwill cause music to blossom like the aloe—late, but glorious? Or will Commerce, like the Old Man of the Sea, ever ride on our shoulders as heretofore and prevent us from turning our looks or thoughts toward Heaven? Who shall say?

## THE "IDEALIZATION" OF INDIAN MUSIC

By CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN

"WHAT is gained if you young and misguided Americans overload your creative efforts with 'idealized rag-time,' or employ Indian folk-tunes as a partial basis for your compositions? Why that fear of turning out your orchestral works, your chamber music or your songs with a stamp 'Made in Germany'—'Made in France'?"

Thus Europe interrogates us, or at least, thus I was interrogated recently by a European musician.

Indeed, these very things are asked with even more vehemence in our own country, though, I am sorry to say, in cynicism, with mistrust, and not without scorn. Still, the little "band of misguided idealists," happily unmindful, moves tranquilly on its pilgrimage.

And why? Because the little band is not trying to express *itself* so much as it is trying to express, in terms of tone, the spirit of the land in which it lives. But again comes a lifting of the eyebrows and: "It's perfectly absurd for you composers who have not a corpuscle of Indian, Negro, or other alien blood in your veins, to imagine that you are expressing anything of your national life by using such thematic material in your compositions."

It is indeed quite true that the brief span of years so far allotted our nation, with the physical and commercial struggle for survival and development, has not permitted any sudden outburst of folk-lore or folk-song that would embody the defeats, the victories, the achievements of our national life. Centuries upon centuries of happiness and suffering are necessary for that.

However, the folk-song that we *have* attempted to idealize has sprung into existence on the American continent. It is as much the heritage of America and Americans and of the musicians who live in America as the music of the barbaric hordes of Russia is the heritage of cultured Russians and Russian musicians. We could mention several ingenious members of the Russian school of music whose veins are without a drop of blood of those wild tribes and who have, nevertheless, caught and reflected the lilt, the life and the love of the strange and elemental peoples that make up the great Russian Empire. These gentlemen are respected by

their fellow musicians and their object of idealization is considered of some moment. Unfortunately, such a parallel cannot be drawn for America, yet it is evident that our composers have *some* justification for idealizing the only existent form of folk-song indigenous to American soil.

If the old life and unconquerable spirit of the red man were not wrapped up in the history of this continent, how strange that would be! One cannot live in the Great West without sensing it and thinking how it would "sound" in terms of rhythm and melody. The composer feels the very pulse of it in his contact with the awesome cañons, the majestic snow-capped ranges and the voiceless yet beautiful solitudes of the desert. And if the composer from his dream-height seems to feel these things calling to him, calling in plaintive cadences, in dynamic syncopation that strongly and strangely symbolizes the restless energy of his great land, he may be forgiven.

It is interesting to know that a few have tried to catch these big things. To have made a beginning is eloquent in itself.

On the other hand, if he finds aught of romance, of singularly primitive appeal and of mysticism in the music of those one-time enslaved and paradoxically jubilant people of the Southland, why deny him "for art reasons" the right to idealize it? Would you kill out every germ of national expression? No, the ridiculed idealist, though he may employ clumsy methods and though his results may seem awkward, is upon the right road. Before we run we must creep.

The chief objection of those who oppose the harmonizing and idealizing of Indian themes is based upon the assertion that the American Indian has no conception of harmony; that his tunes are homogeneous and accompanied only by the beat of a drum or the shaking of a rattle; since he has evolved no harmonic scheme in connection with his music it is therefore quite impossible for a member of an alien race with a definite harmonic concept to clothe the naked tunes in a manner that would intimately reflect the original content. "When you do this, you violate every rule of esthetics," they tell us. Now, I cannot see a solution of this problem from the standpoint of esthetics. Many an art-movement has run the gauntlet of "esthetics" and has reached the bright and hopeful road to success at the very moment when it looked doomed. With all due regard for esthetics and the esthetic principles involved, the matter is more elastic than many think.

That Indian theme does not lose their native characteristics when harmonized and idealized intelligently is evidenced at least by one fact, brought out through the research work of several

ethnologists. I shall mention a striking example, which may be taken for what it is worth.

Say Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche in their book "The Omaha Tribe" (27th report of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, pp. 374 and 375): ". . . and in every instance the harmony given [the ethnologist had played the Indian's melodies with a simple four-part harmony for him] has been tested among the Omaha and been preferred by them when the song was played on the piano or organ"; and again: "'That sounds natural!' was the comment on hearing their songs so played, even when it was explained to them that they did not sing their songs in concerted parts; yet they still persisted 'It sounds natural!'" Now, if inclined to treat this incident seriously, we might endeavor to analyze it in two ways: That the Indian's embryonic harmonic sense is a racial remnant of a once (in antiquity) highly musical system, or, that it was a still undeveloped feeling, nebulous, in a state of nascence, when the white man found him. But this is mere theorizing and can lead us to no conclusion, however interesting.

It is really true that no (primitive) race is more music-loving than the American Indian. If you talk with those at the head of any Indian school or those in authority on the many reservations scattered over the West and Southwest, you will find evidence for a firm conviction that Uncle Sam's little wards are in the main quite musical. I have seen Indian children who were slow in mastering the King's English exhibit surprising musical talent. The average Indian boy will show a preference for a musical instrument over any school study. This is no reflection on his unprogressiveness either, for it simply places him alongside of the average American child, and in a way is a convincing argument for a racial equality in musical feeling. The girl students show a singular aptness in the study of the piano and singing, and without a bit of urging on the part of their teachers.

The matter of the Indian's "thinking" an harmonic scheme to his simple melodies, subjective though the process may seem, is but a slight step forward, and the composer who idealizes his melodies follows the line of least resistance. We simply take up the process where the Indian dropped it, just as a European composer upon hearing a Scandinavian folk-song sung or whistled in the provinces and without other accompaniment would take down his folk-song and afterwards use it in an orchestral work, a chamber work, or a song.

The "idealizer," of course, in objectifying the folk-tune in terms of modern musical thought consonant with the present

musical system, would have to exercise intimate sympathy and understanding—in other words, would have to put himself *en rapport* with the native mind.

By sympathy and understanding is implied also a certain ethnologic knowledge. One should, if possible, be in touch with the Indian's legends, his stories and the odd characteristics of his music, primitive though they be, and one should have an insight into the Indian's emotional life concomitant with his naïve and charming art-creations. And while not absolutely necessary, a hearing of his songs on the Reservation amidst native surroundings adds something of value to a composer's efforts at idealizing.

Yet, above all, if the composer has not something to *express musically*, aside from the thematic material he employs, if he can not achieve a composition that is aurally pleasing and attractive, it is better that he abstain from the idealization of Indian themes. Music, interesting music and *good* music first, color afterwards, should be the watchwords for those who experiment with folk-themes.

When is a folk-theme well idealized and when is it badly idealized? We are upon dangerous ground, and I imagine no two composers will agree on this point.

One mistake in idealizing an Indian folk-tune is to lose sight of its original meaning. A war-song cannot be made to ring true if treated as a love-song, and vice versa. The composer should study the accompanying words of a song (if there be such, for sometimes there are nothing but vocables instead of definite words) and also, if possible, the song's connection with any particular phase of Indian life from which the song itself grew. I cannot here resist quoting the words of a certain friend who, though avowedly a propagandist for good music in America, sums up the Indian question thus: "There are those who think that by taking an Indian melody and pasting some chords to it and calling the stuff 'Sitting Bull's last Glimpse of his Squaw,' they have produced an American work of art." This is certainly hard on the folk-song enthusiasts, but there is a world of truth in it.

Indian music is essentially vocal, hence its idealization in song form is easier of fruition. But the themes do not lend themselves successfully to piano music, and little success has been achieved in this direction. Such attempts generally savor of "salon music." The best results have been obtained, first, through an orchestral medium, the song form next, and after that by choral treatment. It may be that the native quality, the mood or

the picture conveyed in subjective musical expression of the Indian, is more easily transmuted and made objective, as it were, through the orchestral palette. Who knows? Indeed, it may be pointed out that the best results obtained by the Russian school have been obtained in exactly this fashion.

A native tune fails to show a semblance of its aboriginal character (to the cultured musician) if treated to simple four-part harmony. This seems to "kill" it. On the other hand there is grave danger of over-treating or over-idealizing it.

I regard the "Indian Suite," by Edward MacDowell, an ideal guide for those who would build upon Indian themes. MacDowell has first of all given us charming music, fascinating and well-conceived music, aside from any color or atmosphere one may discover in its measures. It is not a mere ethnological report set to music. It is a distinct art-work and every movement conveys a definite picture of Indian life. The method of idealization is not abstruse. One can quickly discern the source of the themes: they are borrowed deftly from an ethnological paper by Dr. Theodore Baker, together with some other material. In the next place, MacDowell did not over-idealize or under-idealize (if these terms may be permitted) since there is a happy balance of musical values—of atmosphere obtained, of triumph, of dignity, even of melancholy, wedded to finely conceived contrasts and dynamics. Whether Mr. MacDowell ever seriously studied the subject of Indian folk-lore or folk-music I do not know. But I do know that he has had the genius to produce a work based on good thematic material, soundly worked out and withal pleasing to every musician and music-lover. And it rings *true!*

It is the best orchestral illustration extant, I think, of what may and what may not be done with Indian folk-tunes. It serves to show, too, that it *is* possible to write music which reflects the oddities, the characteristics of Indian rhythm and melody, and at the same time to create something that may be analyzed freely *as music*.

Only one-fifth of all Indian thematic material is valuable in the hands of a composer—is suitable for harmonic investment. It becomes necessary to choose an Indian song or chant that is attractive in its simplicity, one that will stand alone by virtue of its inherent melodic line, and is fairly good in symmetry; otherwise the idealizer is confronted with a formidable problem. When found, these themes are pure gold. And they exist, certain critics to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is not the intention of the writer to draw comparisons here or to put forward in any way a set rule for the idealization

of Indian folk-themes. In the present period of musical activity in America the correct method and procedure for idealizing either Indian or Negro folk-songs cannot be definitely determined. The answer may be written a few generations hence. The present movement may grow to larger proportions and again it may wither like a blade of grass in a desert. I make no rash prophesies. We are surely too close to the movement to judge its possibilities, its weaknesses, its strength. And the illustrations which follow are entirely due to a request on the part of the Editor of this magazine, and are not meant as a criterion for others to follow. In the course of this article, and only for the purpose of illustrating certain points, it became necessary to inject the personal element; with this explanation I shall proceed to the first example.

Miss Frances Densmore, who has spent a number of years among the Chippewa, includes in her collection, published by the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, a charming love-song. It struck me that this melody might be successfully adapted for a song. I saw that it was unwise to erect a too elaborate harmonic structure upon this already excellent foundation, so I treated it modestly, in fact rather homogeneously. Mrs. Nelle R. Eberhart of Pittsburgh, who has collaborated with me for some years, found, too, that the melody permitted a definite metrical form for singable English, hence her couplet written exactly to the melody. Not a note of the Indian love-song has been changed. It is as Miss Densmore heard it in the Chippewa country. Mrs. Eberhart used a Chippewa legend from the same book for the words of the song, and I have set the present accompaniment under it. The first verse is not quoted here, but the second part, which may or may not be interesting, serves as an illustration of what may be done with an Indian melody.

**Second verse of "From the Long Room of the Sea"**

In a whis - per soft as breath Thus the spir - it

pp

sub 8

*più mosso, agitato*

wall-ing: "In the white ca-noe of death Is thy war-ror

sail - - - ing".

roll.

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Many excellent melodies in the Omaha and Winnebago country were at one time played on a native flageolet. In 1909 I made a number of phonograph records of songs and flageolet love-calls in that country, through the courtesy of Francis La Flesche. I have used the following melody in a vocal and also in an orchestral manner for an episode in an Indian grand opera entitled "The Land of Misty Water," the libretto by Mrs. Eberhart and Francis La Flesche. Naturally it loses something when transcribed to the piano, but the melody itself is obvious. On account of its buoyancy it seemed to demand the key of B major.

mp

sail - - - ing.

roll. pp

The next theme taken from the aforementioned Indian opera was in its native form apparently vigorous in dimensions, hence its treatment orchestrally in the same spirit. It is essentially masculine and occupies such a position in the score. The "tune" is Omaha.



One composer who has had success with the treatment of Indian themes advocates a system with scale relationship as the main principle. He endeavors to ascertain through analysis of the melody itself a concomitant chord association with each note—of certain notes of what he deems the "Indian scale." As a matter of fact few scientists agree upon this question of scale, as there are so many inconsistencies in the related tribal songs and the manner of their rendering. On first consideration the theory of this composer (and he is quite sincere in it, which is necessary) sounds excellent, but if it were put to a too serious working process, I fear, it would subject the poor Indian melody to such a dressing-down as to ultimately destroy any spontaneity it might have had originally. Some melodies would lend themselves to this dogmatic treatment, others decidedly not. A whole collection of tunes idealized in the above manner would appear somewhat monotonous. So it is the composer himself (aided by his own fancy) who must see to it that this monotony does not occur in the treatment of folk-tunes of whatever nationality. Otherwise the use of folk-tunes is a menace. A composer should be absolutely unhampered in his creation of any kind of music. He should permit the themes he makes use of to call into being only their native qualities, attendant color or mood—but above all music that (when completed) is free in form or fairly so, original in design and

certainly pleasing to the average ear. The use of folk-themes is but the means and not the end of composition. The potentiality of a folk-theme is in direct ratio to the ability of the composer to idealize it.

I do not believe in the use of Indian themes or in fact of any other original folk-tunes save where the subject calls for it. For example, if one were picturing orchestrally an episode in the settlement of the "early West" with which the Indian is linked—if he were endowing a chamber work with a Southwestern romantic or historic element, say, something built upon a Joaquin Miller poem—the use of Indian themes would be just as excusable as Czech or Tartar themes for some Russian subject.

I do not contend that such a musical composition when finished is as "pure" or "absolute" as a composition in which every theme is of the composer's own invention, although even this is an open question if put to the esthetical test.

Nationalism is not necessary for the composing of healthy music, and yet what healthy, virile music with a dominantly human appeal exists to-day without a tinge of nationalism? Russian, French, Scandinavian, and Italian music, somehow, recall latitude and longitude. Each brings to mind a geographical *locale*.

So your little band of American dreamers is, after all, only trying to catch the color and the movement, the history and the ethnology and surely the sensation of rhythm related to the soil of America in the legends and tunes of our aborigines and transplanted Africans, who, although unwillingly, have been absorbed into the life and fabric of the American continent.

Perhaps the effort would come nearer to fruition by "reflecting" these folk-song ingredients rather than by using them baldly. This also might make for a truce with the zealots who decry the movement for "art reasons." There are quite a few ways of looking at the problem, and none in this age and generation may solve it. Evolution cannot be hastened one iota.

Every movement in art, science and literature, while in the process of making, must be fired with an ideal and an art-purpose mirrored for the moment or for all time in the history of mankind. This seems to hold good with reference to the various "schools of music" now in existence. As in older schools, so the beginnings of an American school of music must tie to a *tangible something*, and the trail-blazers have utilized the means at hand for their first "infant" expression of a music expressing the land which they call home. Cavil at them if you must, but respect their ideals even though you disagree with the legend upon their banner.

In conclusion, let every composer in America try to write music which is *good* music, whether it smacks of a European conservatory or of the broad, free reaches of the Far West. The essential thing is to make music which shall calm, shall inspire, shall call forth pure and ennobling thoughts, shall fill the needs of the present hour, but shall also point to the next hour as presaging something finer, something higher to strive for.

## GLUCK'S LONDON OPERAS

By WILLIAM BARCLAY SQUIRE

WITH the conspicuous exception of Horace Walpole's letters, we are singularly deficient in social chronicles of the later years of the reign of George II. For contemporary accounts of the invasion of England by Prince Charles Edward in 1745, of his surprising march to Derby and the consternation it created in London—when the news arrived on a day long remembered as 'Black Friday'—Walpole's letters, which are our chief authority, have to be supplemented by reference to the newspapers of the day. Although London in 1745 did not, as at the present day, suffer from the plethora of papers—each anxious to go one better than the others in purveying 'news' of doubtful authenticity—enough can be gathered from the collection made by Dr. Burney and now preserved in the British Museum to show that the alarm in the South of England was very real. Stories of spies and of poisoned wells were rife then, just as they have been in our own time, but the chief scare raised successfully by the Hanoverians was that the return of the House of Stuart would mean the spread, if not actually the establishment, of the Roman Catholic religion. It seems impossible to realize that London should have believed that the English Catholics, after a century and a half of cruel suppression, were sufficiently numerous or powerful to be a real source of danger, but the metropolis—as in the time of the Civil War—was the headquarters of the bitterest form of Puritanism, and though it may not have been specially devoted to the House of Hanover, nor remarkably zealous in attending the churches of the Establishment, at least it was unfaltering and sincere in its hatred of Papacy. Charles Edward left Edinburgh on Oct. 31, and until the beginning of the retreat from Derby (Dec. 6) all London was in confusion and anxiety. Troops were enlisted for six months; detachments of the Guards and the Trained Bands were posted at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Royal Exchange, Devonshire Square, St. Dunstan's in the West and St. Sepulchre's; the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended for six months; £100 reward was offered for the arrest of every 'Popish Priest or Jesuit'; the barristers of the Middle Temple formed themselves into a regiment, with Lord Chief Justice Willes at their head, and a run on the Bank of England

was only stopped by the curious expedient of paying in sixpenny pieces.

One only has to turn to the newspapers of the day to realize how valuable to the cause of Hanover was the Papist scare; perhaps one of the most curious details is the advertisement (quoted by Walpole in a letter to Mann) to the effect that "Papists eat no meat on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday nor during Lent"—a statement which was doubtless intended to secure the loyalty of the cattle-breeders and butchers to the carnivorous House of Hanover. In the face of this strong Protestant feeling it is not to be wondered at that, though the theatres remained open, the opera-house in the Haymarket was closed "on account" as Burney says, "of the rebellion, and popular prejudice against the performers, who being foreigners were chiefly Roman Catholics."

Since 1741 the Italian opera had been under the directorship of a committee of noblemen and gentlemen, who are thus described by Horace Walpole:

There are eight, Lord Middlesex, Lord Holderness, Mr. Frederick, Lord Conway, Mr. Damer, Lord Brook, and Mr. Brand. The five last are directed by the three first; they by the first and he by the Abbé Vanneschi, who will make a pretty sum.

The Earl of Middlesex, the figurehead of the undertaking, was Charles Sackville (1711-1769), the eldest son of the first Duke of Dorset; he was Lord of the Treasury, 1743-47, and Master of the Horse to the Prince of Wales, 1747-51. The undertaking was started in the most lavish way. To quote Walpole again:

It is usual to give the poet fifty guineas for composing the books—Vanneschi and Rolli are allowed three hundred. Three hundred more Vanneschi had for his journey to Italy to pick up dancers and performers.

The original company included Monticelli, a male soprano, who was paid 1000 guineas; Visconti, the 'first woman,' also receiving 1000 guineas; Amorevoli (tenor) £850. "This," says Walpole, "at the rate of the great singers, is not so extravagant; but to the Muscovita (though the second woman never had above four hundred) they give six; that is for secret services." The editors of Walpole's letters do not seem to have identified the lady who combined the position of 'second woman' with that of mistress to Lord Middlesex: she was a Signora Panichi, an artist "without mark or likelihood," according to Burney. But, in connection with Gluck, the most interesting name in this list of Lord Middlesex's original staff is that of the Abate Francesco Vanneschi, as to whom

there is a good deal to be gleaned from various sources, but chiefly from Walpole's letters and Burney's History.

From Allacci we know that he was a Florentine, and (according to Ademollo's 'Corilla Olimpica') a burletta by him on the subject of the "Serva Padrona" was played at Florence in 1732. Ferdinando Sbigoli's "Tommaso Crudeli e i primi Framassoni in Firenze" describes him as "un tristo . . . che prestando agli Inglesi disonesti servigi, si faceva pagar la merce, non di rado scadente, troppo più del dovere." His librettos are "roba da chiodi e veramente scellerata." In 1741 Walpole met at Calais some of the principal members of the Italian Opera Company, among whom was Vanneschi. "What a coxcomb!" (he writes) "I would have talked to him about the opera, but he preferred politics." In 1742, Walpole (who had become a subscriber to the opera) wrote that "We keep Monticelli and Amorevoli, and to please Lord Middlesex that odious Muscovita; but shall discard Mr. Vanneschi"—an intention which does not appear to have been carried out. Burney states that he was employed by Lord Middlesex first as poet and then as assistant manager: "In process of time, from prime minister, upon his lordship's abdication, he assumed the sovereignty of the opera state." In 1743 Walpole wrote to Mann: "I don't know whether Vanneschi be dead; he married some low Englishwoman who is kept by Amorevoli; so the Abate turned the opera every way to his profit." But the married Abate was by no means dead, and until 1747 he continued to be employed at the opera-house. When he first came to England is uncertain. Allacci states that he wrote the libretto of 'Alessandro in Persia,' performed with Paradies's music at Lucca and as a pasticcio in London in 1741. He was in England, as Burney tells us, when Lord Middlesex assumed the direction of the opera, and he wrote (or arranged) for London the libretto of Galuppi's 'Scipione in Cartagine' (1742), and 'Enrico' (1743), 'L'Incotanza delusa' (altered from Vincenzo Cassani's 'Incotanza schernita')—a pasticcio (1745), Gluck's 'Caduta de' Giganti' (1745), 'Anibale in Capua'—a pasticcio (1746), 'Mitridate' (1746) and 'Bellerofonte' (1747)—both by Terradellas, 'Fetonte' (1747) by Paradies and 'La Comedia in Comedia' (1748)—an adaptation of a play (produced in Florence in 1741) by C. A. Pelli, with music by Rinaldo da Capua. In the autumn of 1748, "serious operas," as they were called, were discontinued and comic operas were given under the management of a Dr. Croza. This individual absconded from his creditors in 1750 and no operas were given until 1753, when Vanneschi again attempted the management. His forces, however, could not (to quote

Burney) "keep the manager out of debt, or hardly out of jail, till the arrival of Mingotti" in the autumn of 1754. In the following year Vanneschi's name again occurs in Walpole's letters. A supposed Gunpowder plot was discovered and Vanneschi and others were arrested. But the affair was hardly a nine-days' wonder and "a conclusion was made, that it was a malicious design against the Lord High Treasurer of the opera and his administration," and so "Vanneschi and others" were released. (*Walpole to Bentley, 6 May, 1755*). The engagement of Mingotti did not bring a long spell of prosperity to Vanneschi. Walpole says that although she was "a noble figure, a great mistress of music and a most incomparable actress," yet she "surpassed anything I ever saw for the extravagance of her humours." She refused to sing with Ricciarelli and quarrelled with Vanneschi, which led to as many disputes and feuds as those between Handel and Bononcini, or Faustina Hasse and Cuzzoni, thirty years before. The Duke of Cumberland supported Mingotti and the end came in 1756, when he assumed the direction of the Opera House, with Giardini as manager. Vanneschi became bankrupt and was imprisoned in the Fleet. Burney states that in the summer of 1756 he withdrew "*à la sourdine*, in the same manner as his predecessor Dr. Croza," and after this his name disappears from the annals of opera in England.

To return from this digression—for which the only excuse is that it deals with the career of the librettist of 'La Caduta de' Giganti'—it is beyond the subject of this paper to enter into details as to Lord Middlesex's management of the opera from 1741 until the closing of the King's theatre in 1745, owing to the Jacobite rebellion. After the retreat of Charles Edward from Derby, London could breathe again, and in order that there should be no doubt of the loyalty of the Papist musicians to the House of Hanover, it was decided to open the King's Theatre with an opera written specially to compliment the popular young Duke of Cumberland, whose advance across England had driven the Jacobites back to Scotland. (As a matter of fact, the rebellion was by no means crushed. Carlisle surrendered on December 30 and on January 2 Cumberland left for London, where it was believed that a French invasion was imminent. But on January 17 General Hawley was defeated at Falkirk and the Duke had to hurry back to Scotland, reaching Edinburgh on January 30).

Why the commission for this work was given to Gluck we do not know, but it may be conjectured with some plausibility that it was owing to his having studied for four years (1737-1741) with Giovanni Battista San Martini of Milan, whose brother Giuseppe

(known as 'San Martini of London') was first oboist at the opera so far back as 1729 and at a later date was patronized by Frederick, Prince of Wales. (It will be remembered that the Prince of Wales was for long in open opposition to George II: the latter supported Handel's operas, which ended disastrously in 1741; Lord Middlesex's management was patronized by the Prince of Wales). Giuseppe San Martini was a well-known figure in London, and many of his works, as well as those of his more talented brother Giovanni Battista, were published there by Walsh. Gluck, as has recently been pointed out by the Count de Saint Foix, owed much to the instruction of the Milanese San Martini and his early operas were produced with marked success in North Italy immediately after his studies at Milan were ended. 'Artaserse' saw the light at Milan in 1741, 'Demetrio' at Venice in 1742, 'Demofoonte' at Milan in 1742, 'Tigrane' at Crema in 1743, 'Sofonisba' at Milan in 1744, 'Ipermestra' at Venice in 1744, 'Poro' at Turin in 1745 and 'Ippolito' at Milan in 1745. This string of operas was sufficient to draw attention to the work of a pupil of a composer so well-known as San Martini, and moreover some of the singers engaged at the opera were already familiar with Gluck's music. Jozzi had sung in 'Artaserse' in 1741, Signora Imer in 'Demetrio' in 1742, and Amorevoli and Monticelli in 'Ippolito' in 1745, so it is evident that Gluck's name was by no means unknown in London, at all events among musicians. What little has been hitherto known about the production of 'La Caduta de' Giganti' has been confined to Burney's short account and to the advertisements in the General Advertiser, where it was announced as follows (on January 4):

Hay-Market. At the King's Theatre in the Hay-Market, on Tuesday next, will be perform'd a Musical Drama, in Two Parts, call'd *La Caduta de' Giganti*, The Fall of the Giants. With Dances and other Decorations entirely new. Pit and Boxes to be put together, and no Persons to be admitted without Tickets, which will be delivered that Day at the Opera-Office in the Hay-Market, at Half-a-Guinea each. Gallery 5s. The Gallery to be open'd at Four o'clock. Pit and Boxes at Five. To begin at Six o'clock.

This advertisement was repeated on January 7, with the addition: "By His Majesty's Command no Persons whatever to be admitted behind the Scenes." Burney says that the opera was performed before the Duke of Cumberland—whether at the first or at some subsequent performance it is not very important to decide.

So far the details we have given as to Gluck's first appearance as a composer in England have been gathered together from accessible sources of information, most of which were used in M. Wot-

quenne's excellent Thematic Catalogue, published in a German translation in 1904, with an appendix issued in 1911, but a recent discovery has fortunately brought to light fresh facts about both 'La Caduta de' Giganti' and 'Artamene.' The appointment last year of a new Keeper of the Department of Printed Books in the British Museum was followed by a complete overhauling of various obscure corners and shelves of the library, with the result that, among a great accumulation of worthless books and papers, there was found a large and valuable collection of librettos, dating from the end of the 17th century to about 1830. How these came to the Museum, why, having come there, they had been put on one side and forgotten, it is impossible to say. The later volumes seem to have belonged to William Ayrton, a well-known writer on music, who was connected with the Italian opera in London in the early 19th century, and as the series includes an almost complete set of librettos of operas performed at the King's Theatre, the whole set—or at least those printed in England—may well have passed from the opera-house into Ayrton's possession. For our present purpose, however, the importance of the find lies in the fact that it included the librettos of Gluck's two London operas, 'La Caduta de' Giganti' and 'Artamene,' both of which were hitherto believed to be lost. The libretto of 'La Caduta de' Giganti' is a small octavo of fifty pages, with the Italian text and the English translation printed on opposite pages. The title-page is as follows:

La/ Caduta de' Giganti./ Drama,/ per il/ Teatro di S. M. B./ Di F.  
Vanneschi./ Imperium est Jovis/ Clari Gigantœ triumpho./ Horat. Lib.  
III. Ode I./ Londra, MDCCXLV./ [Price One Shilling.]

Over this has been pasted another title, with the slight alteration: "La/ Caduta de' Giganti, o La/ Ribellione Punita./ Drama" etc. (as above)—evidently an afterthought, adopted in order to connect the opera definitely with the defeat of the Jacobites. The English version of the argument is as follows:

The Giants having rebell'd in order to dethrone Jupiter in the Skies and deprive the other Gods of their Freedom; whilst they are piling Mountain upon Mountain, Jupiter darts Thunder from Olympus, and takes due Vengeance on their daring Attempt, by burying them under the ruins of the Mountains they had rais'd. Juno's Jealousy, and Jupiter's Amour with Iris, are introduc'd merely as Episodes.

#### The cast follows:

GIOVE  
GIUNONE  
IRIDE

Il Sig. Monticelli  
La Sig. Imer  
La Sig. Pompeati

MARTE  
TITANO }  
BRIAREO }

Giganti

Musica del Sig. Gluck.

Il Sig. Jozzi  
Il Sig. Ciacchi  
La Sig. Frasi

It is curious to learn that Frasi appeared in a male part, as one of the Giants, but in her earlier days, in London at least, this was not at all uncommon: probably her commanding figure accounted for her appearance as a "male impersonator," and in those days, when heroic characters were filled by male sopranos, there would be nothing incongruous in a female singer's appearing as a giant. Frasi is now best remembered by the story of her telling Handel that she was going to learn thorough bass in order to accompany herself, which brought upon her the sarcastic comment: "Oh! vaat may we not expect!"

'La Caduta de' Giganti' is in two acts—called 'parti'—and follows the conventional form of Zeno's and Metastasio's librettos, each scene consisting of dialogue (in verse) ending with a lyrical number. The following is a summary of the book:

### PART I

#### SCENE 1

The scene is an "Atrio della regia di Giove nell' Olimpo." Jupiter tells Mars and Juno that he is sending Iris to report on the rumours of insurrection on earth: if she cannot find out, he will go himself. This rouses Juno's jealousy. The scene ends with a song for Juno (1) "Tra tanti dubbi."

#### SCENE 2

Iris reports to Jupiter that the giants are in revolt. He decides to descend to earth and sings: (2) "Se si accende in fiamme ardenti."

#### SCENE 3

Mars, left alone with Iris, makes love to her and sings (3) "Care pupille, amate."

#### SCENE 4

Iris, left alone, confesses her love for Mars in a song: (4) "Vezzi, lusinghe, e sguardi."

#### SCENE 5

The scene changes to Earth—a "Luogo di Spelonche." Titan and Briareus discuss their enterprise.

#### SCENE 6

Jupiter and Mars, both disguised, watch Titan, who sings: (5) "Chi mai non vide fuggir le sponde."

#### SCENE 7

Iris, followed by the Demi-Gods, joins Jupiter and Mars. They seat themselves in the cavern on stones round Jupiter, who calls them to arms. Mars responds by singing: (6) "Conserva a noi il contento."

## SCENE 8

Jupiter, left alone, is joined by Juno. He tries to allay her jealousy and sings: (7) "Tornate sereni."

## SCENE 9

After Jupiter has gone out, Iris re-enters: she denies Juno's accusations of an intrigue with Jupiter. Juno sings: (8) "Di, che rival mi sei."

## SCENE 10

Briareus finds Iris alone and warns her of the coming danger in a song: (9) "Se in grembo all'erbe, e ai fiori."

## SCENE 11

Jupiter and Iris, ending with a short love-duet: (10) "Ah! m'ingannasti, quando dicesti."

## PART II

## SCENE 1

The scene is "A rural prospect, in which is a wood, whence come forth Titan, Briareus, followed by giants." Titan defies Jupiter, though Briareus points out that the help promised by the Demi-Gods has not arrived. Titan *exit* after singing: (11) "Pensa che trema il ciel."

## SCENE 2

Mars (disguised) tries in a song: (12) "Dal tuo destin vedrai," to persuade Briareus to abandon the revolt.

## SCENE 3

Briareus, left alone, indulges in a fit of boasting: (13) "Non è ver, non sei mendace."

## SCENE 4

The action (!) returns to the love-affairs of Jupiter, whose song (14) "Placido Zeffiretto" is overheard by Juno. He persuades her it was intended for her; she sings; (15) "Mai l'amor mio verace" and *exit*.

## SCENE 5

Iris and Mars bring news of the rebellion and how the Giants have piled Pelion on Ossa. Mars *exit*, whereupon Jupiter makes love to Iris in a song (16) "Si, ben mio, farò, se il vuoi."

## SCENE 6

Juno returns and Jupiter runs away from her. Iris tells Juno that her husband is in danger: (17) "Volgo dubbiosa il passo" (Iris).

## SCENE 7

Juno resolves to go to Jupiter's aid: (18) "Se dell' onde il dolce moto."

## SCENE 8

The scene changes to "A pile of mountains. A view of mount Olympus, which the Giants ascend in order to invade the skies. As they advance, thunder darts from thence, which disperses them; when, the mountain opening that instant, the Giants are buried in the ruins. Titan, Briareus,

follow'd by arm'd Giants, as prepar'd to scale the skies. These come forth with fury, a warlike symphony sounding." After some short speeches the symphony is repeated, "they advance hastily towards the mountain; in the midway of which, they are stopt by thunder, and struck down."

## SCENE 9

"The Giants being thunder-struck, the mountains disappear; when, on a sudden, the palace of Jupiter opens; and, a cloud descending, the celestial Demi-Gods are seen. At the opening of the palace the warlike symphony changes to a joyful one." A short chorus, with solos (19) follows: "Tua mercè monarco invitto." Short speeches by Jupiter, Mars, Iris and Juno precede a song for Jupiter: (20) "E uguale ad un tormento" and the opera ends with a chorus (21):

Non vi è piacer perfetto  
Non vi è grandezza, onore  
Che alletti, o piaccia al core,  
Senza la libertà.

Which is thus freely translated:

Hail, Liberty! without thy charms,  
The brightest regions are unblest.  
O! keep thine ALBION from alarms,  
And lull her pangs to balmy rest.

It is hardly to be wondered at that this precious farrago met with but little success. The opera-nights in 1746 were on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and the work (produced on Saturday, January 11) was only repeated on the 14th, 18th, 21st and 25th. On the 28th it was replaced by 'Il Trionfo della Continenza,' by Galuppi, which ran until March 4, when Gluck's second London opera, 'Artamene,' was produced.

Very little of the music of 'La Caduta de' Giganti' has survived, and that only in the shape of a set of "Favourite Songs," published by Walsh (advertised as just issued on March 13). This gave M. Wotquenne the names of six of the songs in his thematic catalogue (Nos. 3, 4, 6, 10, 16, and 20 of the above summary) and three more (Nos. 11, 15, and 17) were supplied by the programme of an "Entertainment of Vocal and Instrumental Musick" given for the benefit of the Fund "for the support of decay'd musicians or their families" at the King's Theatre on March 25, as announced in the General Advertiser for March 14. From these sources M. Wotquenne and Herr Liebeskind point out that (3) "Care pupille," (4) "Vezzi, lusinghe" and (16) "Si, ben mio" were taken from "Tigrane," as produced at Crema in 1743; (6) "Conserva a noi il contento" is an adaptation of "Perdono al crudo acciaro" from

'Ipermestra' (Venice, 1744); (15) "Mai l'amor mio verace" is also from 'Ipermestra'; and (10) "Ah! m'ingannasti" is from 'Ippolito' (Milan, 1745). The discovery of the libretto enables us further to trace (5) "Chi mai non vide fuggir le sponde" to words by Metastasio used in "Sofonisba" (Milan, 1744) and again in 'Issipile' (Prague, 1752); (7) "Tornate sereni"—also words by Metastasio—to 'Sofonisba'; and (9) "Se in grembo" to 'Tigrane' (Crema, 1743). Thus, of the twenty-one vocal numbers in 'La Caduta de' Giganti,' no fewer than nine were taken from Gluck's earlier operas!

The history of 'Artamene' has been a good deal complicated by the curious mistake made by some of Gluck's biographers in stating that he wrote an opera with this title which was produced either at Crema or Cremona in 1743. This work figures in M. Wotquenne's catalogue, published in 1904, and to it the learned librarian of the Brussels Conservatoire attributed various excerpts preserved in the Conservatoire at Paris. But in the ninth volume of the Sammelbände of the International Musical Society, Signor Francesco Piovano showed conclusively that this early work, produced at Crema in 1743, was called 'Tigrane.' The libretto (slightly imperfect) is preserved in the library of the Accademia Sta. Cecilia at Rome<sup>1</sup> and Signor Piovano showed that eleven of the excerpts M. Wotquenne gave as belonging to the mythical 'Artamene' of 1743 came from 'Tigrane'; six more were from a pasticcio, 'Arsace' (Milan, 1744), to which Gluck contributed, while three could not be identified. These important corrections were embodied in Herr Liebeskind's Supplement (1911) to Wotquenne's catalogue. Although M. Wotquenne was mistaken in accepting the statements as to an 'Artamene' having been produced by Gluck in 1744, he was right in surmising that, if the libretto of the London 'Artamene' was ever discovered, it would prove to be quite different from that of the work performed at Crema—which, as Signor Piovano has shown, was called 'Tigrane' and had nothing to do with 'Artamene.' The libretto, which has now been found in the British Museum, is not quite perfect: pages 5 and 6, containing the names of the Italian cast and the text of scene 1 and part of scene 2 of the first act, being unfortunately missing. The title-page is as follows:

Artamene./ Drama,/ per il/ Teatro di S. M. B./ Saxa ferasque  
lyrā movit Rhodopeius Orpheus./ Ovid. Art. Amat. Lib. III./ [Printer's  
device.]/ Londra, 1746./ [One Shilling.]

<sup>1</sup>A complete copy is in the Library of Congress.—Ed.

It is noticeable that no author's name is given. As a matter of fact, the book is altered from the 'Artamene' of Bartolommeo Vitturi, which was produced with music by Tommaso Albinoni at Venice in 1740. (M. Wotquenne says that it had been previously set by Ignazio Fiorillo in Milan in 1738, but Signor Piovano shows that this opera was 'Artimene,' quite a different work.) It was a very common thing in the 18th century for composers to lay their hands on librettos which had already been set by other men; in these cases alterations were generally made by the 'poet' attached to the theatre where the new work was to be produced. In this case it would be Vanneschi who altered Vitturi's work. A copy of the latter is preserved in the Schatz Collection in the Library of Congress, but an opportunity has not occurred of comparing it with the London libretto, so it is not possible to say at present how much the two differ beyond the change of the name of Akbar, the Mogul Emperor (in Albinoni's opera) to Ormontes in Gluck's 'Artamene.' It would be tiresome and superfluous to give a summary of the three acts of 'Artamene,' as has been done in the case of 'La Caduta de' Giganti'; the following is a list of the vocal numbers, as given in the libretto:

## ACT I.

- (1). Se crudeli tanto siete. (Padmane.)
- (2). Se in campo armato. (Artamene)
- (3). E maggiore d'ogni altro dolore. (Tamur.)
- (4). T'intendo ingratto. (Sandalida.)
- (5). Il suo leggiadro viso. (Cosru.)
- (6). Nobil onda. (Artamene.)
- (7). Non vi piacle ingiusti dei. (Padmane.)

## ACT II.

- (8). Caro tu solo sei. (Sandalida.)
- (9). Troppo ad un'alma è caro. (Tamur.)
- (10). Pensa a serbarmi o cara. (Artamene.)
- (11). O sciogli i lacci miei. (Sandalida.)
- (12). Or del tuo rè la sorte. (Ormontes.)
- (13). La speranza non m'inganni. (Cosru.)
- (14). Mesti augelli, che cantando. (Artamene.)
- (15). Disperato in mare turbato. (Sandalida.)
- (16). Se fedel cor mio tu sei. (Duet, Padmane and Artamene.)

## ACT III.

- (17). Perfida non ascolto. (Ormontes.)
- (18). Rasserenai il mesto ciglio. (Artamene.)
- (19). Per lei fra le armi. (Sandalida.)
- (20). Presso l'onda d'Acheronte. (Padmane.)
- (21). Già presso al termine. (Cosru.)
- (22). Da noi gli affanni fuggono. (Chorus.)

In addition to the above, a manuscript note in the libretto informs us that No. 13 was sung in the 3rd scene of Act II instead of in scene 2, where the words were printed. As in the case of 'La Caduta de' Giganti,' Walsh published (on March 18) a selection from the songs in 'Artamene,' and from this source we know that Monticelli appeared as Artamene, Jozzi as Cosru, Signora Pompeati as Padmane and Signora Frasi (again in a male rôle) as Tamur. Signora Imer was therefore probably the Sandalida and Ciacchi the Ormontes. The songs printed by Walsh are: (1) "Se crudeli," (3) "È maggiore," (5) "Il suo leggiadro viso," (10) "Pensa a serbarmi," (18) "Rasserena il mesto ciglio" and (21) "Già presso al termine." From Wotquenne we know that of these the words of No. 3 are from Metastasio's 'Issipile' and the music from 'Sofonisba' (Milan, 1744); No. 5 is from 'Demofoonte' (Milan, 1743); the words of No. 10 are from Metastasio's 'Ezio'; No. 18 is a new setting of words from 'Tigrane' (Crema, 1743) and the words of No. 21 are from Metastasio's 'Adriano in Siria.' The libretto enables us further to trace the following: No. 2, words from Metastasio's 'Catone,' music from 'Sofonisba'; No. 4, from 'Demofoonte'; No. 6, words from Metastasio's 'Siface,' music from 'Sofonisba'; No. 7, words from Metastasio's 'Siroe,' music from 'Sofonisba'; No. 8 from 'Sofonisba,' No. 9, from 'Tigrane'; No. 12, words by Metastasio (altered), music from 'Ipermestra,' No. 15, words by Metastasio, music from 'Demetrio'; No. 16, words from Metastasio's 'Orti Esperidi,' music from 'Sofonisba'; No. 19, words by Metastasio, from 'Demofoonte'; and No. 20 from 'Tigrane.' Thus of the twenty-two vocal numbers in 'Artamene,' no fewer than twelve were derived from Gluck's earlier operas! The introduction of so many songs with words by Metastasio alone shows, without actually comparing the two librettos, how much Vitturi's work must have been altered for Gluck's use.

'Artamene' was more successful than its predecessor, for it was repeated on March 8, 11, 15, 18 and 22 and April 1, 5, 8 and 12. On March 11 (according to the General Advertiser) it was announced that "Madem. Violette, a new Dancer from Vienna, will perform this Day, for the first time," which enables us to correct a mistake of Burney's, who says that in 'La Caduta de' Giganti' "the new dances by . . . the charming Violetta, afterwards Mrs. Garrick, were much more applauded than the songs." The omission of Tuesday, March 25, in the record of the run of 'Artamene' is explained by the fact that a concert was given that night. On April 12 the song "Rasserena il mesto ciglio" was sung by Mrs. Arne at Drury Lane as an "Entertainment in the Orphan" "for

the benefit of Mr. Arne," "being particularly desired by several Ladies of Quality," and on April 14 Gluck appeared at a concert in Hickford's Great Room, Brewer Street (which is still in existence) and played a concerto on the Glasharmonica "a new instrument of 26 glasses": this was repeated at the King's Theatre on April 23, shortly after which he must have left England, for there is no further record of him or his music until a selection from 'Alceste' was performed at the King's Theatre on April 10, 1780, with Signora Bernasconi in the part of Alceste.

In conclusion a correction must be made of a statement to be found in Fétis and Grove and their numerous followers, to the effect that Gluck, when in England, had a share in the music of a pasticcio called 'Piramo e Tisbe.' There is no trace of such a work to be found either in the advertisements of the time or in the British Museum series of librettos. 'Artamene' was succeeded on April 15 by a revival of Lampugnani's 'Alessandro nell' Indie' and this (on May 13) by Galuppi's 'Antigono,' which ran until the end of the season (on June 24). The only explanation that can be hazarded for the misstatement is that Lampe's 'Pyramus and Thisbe' was being played at Covent Garden in February, when Gluck was in England.

## ACOUSTICS: SUGGESTIONS IN BEHALF OF AN UNPOPULAR SUBJECT

By LOUIS C. ELSON

**W**HEN the wonderful advance of the musical curriculum in America is taken into consideration, it is astonishing how little attention is given to the foundation subject of Acoustics. Many conservatories which insist upon Musical History, Solfeggio, Harmonic Analysis, and many other accessory studies, are entirely innocent of any attempts in the direction of the physical basis of Sound and Music, and make no effort to include the topic in their course. Many an advanced musician while stating facts in instrumentation to his class is yet unable to explain the causes of these facts. It is the object of this article to indicate a few of the points in which acoustics may be a direct aid to the teacher.

There are many myths in music which the scientifically trained teacher will at once proceed to demolish. In the first place, musical progressions have, as far as is yet discovered, no real foundation in Nature. It is true that Nature gives us a chord, whenever any tone is sounded, yet she gives us no connection whatever of one chord with another, but presents these chords isolated and disconnected. It is possible that some of the most fiendish effects of ultra-modern music may seek an apology in the discords which the different chords of Nature make when sounding simultaneously, although in Nature they are sounded so faintly as to be inaudible to the average ear, while your true modern insists upon giving them fortissimo!

The teacher who has studied acoustics will be able to demonstrate to his pupils that music is an artificial product, of which the crude materials only are natural. Nature gives us regular vibration (in a tone), a simple chord (in the overtones), and a sense of rhythm. From these materials man evolves melody, connection of chords (harmony), uniting of melodies (counterpoint), and a certain arrangement of material in set progressions (scales or tonalities). He does this about as arbitrarily as he created languages from isolated and meaningless

sounds. His scales differ about as much as languages differ. There is no such thing as a scale of nature. Here are a few of the arrangements of tones which constitute the scales of different races:

#### CHINESE OR OLD SCOTTISH



represented by the melodies of "Auld Lang Syne," "Bonnie Doon," etc.

#### BYZANTINE OR COPTIC



#### HUNGARIAN GYPSY



used by Paderewski in his opera "Manru."

#### SIAMESE



which brings us very close to M. Debussy and his school. And many other progressions might be cited, the Gregorian, the hexachordal, etc., while the Hindoo divides his scale into smaller intervals than can be represented in our notation, which, several Englishmen have assured us, although seemingly out-of-tune at first, become pleasing to the ear after it has heard them several times. The ever-changing style of music is but a proof that it is as much an artificial product as language itself.

Another myth which the acoustician may bowl over is the frequently made statement that animals are fond of music. We doubt whether a spider, a mouse, a horse or an elephant would be

moved in any great degree by Wagner, or Beethoven, or Bach, but a well-marked two-step, or a swingy march might have some effect. In short it is the *rhythm*, not the substance, of music which charms the lower creation, when it is not the steady vibration of tone itself. The music of the snake-charmers of India might be scientifically investigated with this thought in mind.

Another false idea in music could be taken up by the teacher who is versed in acoustics. The statement made by many musicians and composers that tone represents color has no tangible foundation. The half-informed ones here intrench themselves behind the incontrovertible fact that tone is vibration and color is vibration also. The scientist must inform them that *everything* is vibration or motion of some sort, and that the vibrations of light are essentially different from those of tone. Also that the vibrations which produce the impression of color begin at about 460 trillions per second, while the vibrations of tone cease to be audible at about 38,000 per second, a gap which is almost too large for the human mind to span. Also that the human brain cannot perceive a single octave of color, while it can appreciate over eleven octaves of pitch. Also the rather important fact that, while many composers are very positive in their assertion that certain keys suggest certain colors, scarcely any two of them agree upon which color each key represents!

But it is not only in the spirit of destruction, or contradiction, that the musician should study his acoustics. Let us suppose the case of a violin teacher giving a pupil his first instruction in pizzicato-playing. He tells the student not to pick the string at the place where he has been in the habit of bowing, but further away from the bridge. The investigating student asks (and very properly)—“Why?” The teacher probably responds—“Because it gives a better tone”—and if the pupil put in another “Why?” he would probably remain unanswered.

The teacher should have the primitive knowledge that, with every tone that is sounded, there blend fainter, higher tones, which make the quality of the tone. He should know that while these occur in a certain fixed order they may differ greatly in power; that if they are too weak a “dead” or muddy tone is the result, while if they are too strong an irritating, aggressive, “tinpanny” tone is caused. He should understand that the plucked string gives the overtones more strongly than the bowed one; that the nearer to the centre we pluck the string, the more important overtones we destroy, thus making the tone duller; that we correct its over-brightness by this process.

Reasoning further upon the same line he will find that this is why the harper plucks his string in the centre; he may investigate a little further and find that the quality of the piano would greatly deteriorate if we put the hammers at some other proportion of the length of the string than just where they strike now. He might, by experiment, find out that if he plucked a string with his fingernail it would sound much brighter than if he used his finger-tip, and thus learn that plucking with a hard substance shivers the string into many small segments and produces many of the high overtones with inordinate power, thus making the irritating tone above mentioned. And thus he would be led to the subject of quality of tone and discover that in a rich and mellow tone the lower overtones must be rather full and the upper overtones faint, but clear.

Following out this line of inquiry he might discover that the delicacy of a tone depends upon just this preservation of the faint upper overtones, and this might reveal to him why his violin tone is "dead" in a damp and muggy hall, while it is delightful in a bright, clear atmosphere. The upper overtones are smothered out in the heavy air. This might reveal the cause of the almost celestial tone of the zither when heard on the high Alps. It might also reveal to him why he is never quite satisfied when he hears a great violinist's tone reproduced upon any of the records on any of the machines of gramophonic variety. The faint, high overtones cannot record themselves upon the wax, and the quality of the tone suffers because of this.

Still pursuing this train of thought he might understand why the mandolin is the brightest of all the stringed instruments, noting that it is plucked with a pick instead of by finger-tips. And now he might suddenly grasp the cause of the deep sound-box with which the instrument is provided. He would readily judge that it is the function of the gourd-shaped box to mellow a tone which might otherwise be far too bright, and he might verify this by listening to the modern invention which supplies the mandolin with a flat sound-box.

This subject would certainly lead him on to note other sound-boxes. He would then understand why the banjo, having not a sound-box, but merely a sounding-board, and that of calf or sheepskin instead of wood, must naturally be inferior to the guitar, in the quality of its tone.

And now, fairly launched upon the subject of sounding-boards and boxes, he would find another interesting point. Ascertaining that all sound (or tone) is merely vibration of the air,

he would note that a mere string, swinging to and fro, can move but an infinitesimal amount of atmosphere; therefore the stringed instrument must have its tone magnified exceedingly by the sounding-box, or, in the piano, by a large sounding-board. Should he pursue this interesting branch much further he would learn that Nature itself has made sounding-boards and boxes. There is a model sound-box in every human ear, and once a cloud (taking the right shape, angle and consistency), forming over Rio Janeiro, sent the sound of bells 200 miles out to sea.

He might study the materials of the sounding-board and find that certain varieties of pine-wood are best for this purpose, since their cells and fibres are almost of the character of a stretched string, and susceptible of far more vibration than those of other woods. He might also notice that a sound-box, be it ever so humble (as on a drum, for example) must needs have a sound-hole (sometimes two) to allow the air in the box to vibrate freely and not to form a cushion to prevent the free vibrations of the front board. He would find that even the sound-box in his ear had an excellent sound-hole in the Eustachian tube.

And now his investigations might lead him to other stringed instruments. If, perchance, he heard a viol d'amore he would be astonished to find that in addition to the seven strings above the finger-board there were seven tiny wires below it, never to be touched by the bow. In seeking to know the secret of these un-played strings he would come upon the most beautiful law of Nature connected with music, the law of synchronism. The strings below the finger-board resound when their tone, or any of its overtones, is given by the string above. Whatever, in the universe, vibrates, will be set in motion if its own rate of vibration or that of any of its overtones is in the air and comes in contact with it.

This matter of contact leads our investigating violinist back to his instrument for a few new acoustical discoveries. He sees now that the bridge leads the vibrations of the strings to the sounding-board, and that the sound-post, under the bridge, leads these vibrations to the back-board, so that his whole sound-box is in vibration when he plays on the string above.

He now begins to broaden out his research into harmonics. He knows that if he touches a string lightly at any equal part of its length he produces one of the overtones alone. Possibly he also knows that this is caused by his dividing the string into several shorter strings of one half, one third, one fourth, etc., of its length (Paganini could divide his strings, made very thin, into twelfths)

and that this number of tiny strings is giving the high tone, all sounding together, and in unison.

But by and by it dawns upon him that it is not only strings that can subdivide in this way, but any column of air, and now he is on the road to the mystery of almost all of the brass instruments. He finds that the column of air in a cornet, a trombone, a horn, divides just as his violin string divided, and that the player, by managing his breath and his lips can produce the overtones one by one; he discovers that a plain tube, as a tallyho coach-horn, for example, can produce, not only a single tone, but several overtones, by symmetrical division of the column of air. Finally, still pursuing this branch of the subject, he discovers that the cornetist, the trombone-player, the horn-player, the trumpeter, holds not one tube, but seven, in his hands, when he is performing, that these tubes are all of different lengths and are made so by the three keys which (singly and in combination) cause each tube to be longer than the other, and that each tube gives its own series of overtones.

By this time our musician ought to be convinced that the study of acoustics is not a mere theoretical but an intensely practical one for him and for all musicians. Many further lines of study and investigation lie before the enthusiast. The mysteries of architectural acoustics will lead him to many strange discoveries about successes and failures in concert-halls and opera-houses. The tremendous force which lies latent in synchronism, or sympathetic vibration, is a very fascinating topic to pursue. The great discoveries of analysis and synthesis of tones upon which we are verging, the wonderful results of different shapes of vibrations, will be only a few of the many points of interest beyond those that we have enumerated, and he will find both practicality and poetry in the musical fairy-tales of Nature as revealed in the study of acoustics.

## THE IMPRESS OF PERSONALITY IN UNWRITTEN MUSIC

By PERCY GRAINGER

### EXTREMES ATTRACT

IT seems to me a very hopeful sign that the present widespread interest in unwritten music (be it European or Afro-American folk-songs and dances or native music from any quarter of the globe) apparently does not emanate from any reaction against the latest iconoclastic developments of our written art-music, but that, on the contrary, it is mainly in the ranks of the most highly cultured musicians (men whose depth of heart and brain makes them equally capable of appreciating the glorious creations of the great classics and the no less thrilling achievements of the most extreme modernists of to-day) that we meet with the keenest interest in this "back to the land" movement. Among those who have recently devoted themselves most ardently to the labor of actually collecting so-called "primitive" music of various kinds or in whose creative work direct or indirect contact with it has proved the most fruitful we find the names of such advanced composers as Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel, Albeniz, Granados, Cyril Scott, Vaughan Williams, Balfour Gardiner and Ferruccio Busoni, while the great Frederick Delius (to my mind perhaps *the* rarest and most precious musical genius of our age) owes the fact of his becoming a composer at all to the inspiration he received from hearing Negro workers sing on his father's plantation in Florida, which determined him to give up a commercial career in order to study music in Leipzig; a debt to unwritten music that he has fittingly repaid by basing three of his loveliest works on themes of "primitive" origin: "Appalachia," on a Negro-American tune, "Brigg Fair" on the English peasant song of that name from my collection, and his recent "On hearing the first cuckoo in spring" on the Norwegian "I Ola Dalom" (published in Grieg's Op. 66).

In an essay in "The North American Review" for February, 1913, full of insight and rare understanding, by that champion of Russian and other modern music, Mr. Kurt Schindler, on "Boris Godounoff; and the life of Moussorgsky," we read how incalculably much the inspired art of that composer owed to close contact with both the life and the music of Russian peasants.

**PRIMITIVE MUSIC IS TOO COMPLEX FOR  
UNTRAINED MODERN EARS**

While so many of the greatest musical geniuses listen spell-bound to the unconscious, effortless musical utterances of primitive man, the general educated public, on the other hand, though willing enough to applaud adaptations of folk-songs by popular composers, shows little or no appreciation of such art in its unembellished original state, when, indeed, it generally is far too complex (as regards rhythm, dynamics, and scales) to appeal to listeners whose ears have not been subjected to the ultra-refining influence of close association with the subtle developments of our latest Western art-music.

The case of Grieg is typical. For over thirty years his popularity has been almost universally accredited to "national" traits supposed to have been drawn by him from Norwegian folk-songs; but few indeed, at home or abroad, can have taken the trouble to study these elements in their native purity, or they would have discovered for themselves what has been left to Grieg's greatest and most sympathetic biographer, Mr. Henry T. Finck, to point out often and ably: how much more the Norwegian genius owed the unique originality of his music to the strength of his own purely personal inventiveness than to any particular external or "national" source whatever. They would also have been in a position to more fully realize the generosity with which Grieg threw the richness of his strong personality into the task of making the wonders of the peasant music accessible in such avowed "arrangements" as Op. 30, 66, and 72. In these volumes (still strangely little known) we find some of the most inspired examples of his harmonic daring; the more extreme methods of to-day being foreshadowed, again and again, some twenty years ago, with the prophetic quality of true genius.

**WELL DILUTED FOLK-MUSIC**

As a rule folk-music finds its way to the hearts of the general public and of the less erudite musicians only after it has been "simplified" (generally in the process of notation by well-meaning collectors ignorant of those more ornate subtleties of our notation alone fitted for the task) out of all resemblance to its original self. Nor is this altogether surprising when we come to compare town populations with the country-side or "savage" folk to whom we go for the unwritten material.

### UNCIVILIZED LIVES ABOUND IN MUSIC

With regard to music, our modern Western civilization produces, broadly speaking, two main types of educated men. On the one hand the professional musician or leisured amateur-enthusiast who spends the bulk of his waking hours making music, and on the other hand all those many millions of men and women whose lives are far too overworked and arduous, or too completely immersed in the ambitions and labyrinths of our material civilization, to be able to devote any reasonable proportion of their time to music or artistic expression of any kind at all. How different from either of these types is the bulk of uneducated and "uncivilized" humanity of every race and color, with whom natural musical expression may be said to be a universal, highly prized habit that seldom, if ever, degenerates into the drudgery of a mere means of livelihood.

### MENTAL LEISURE AND ART

Mental leisure and ample opportunity for indulging in the natural instinct for untrammelled and uncriticised and untaught artistic self-expression; these are the conditions imperative for the production and continuance of all unwritten music. Now primitive modes of living, however terrible some of them may appear to some educated and refined people, are seldom so barren of "mental leisure" as the bulk of our civilized careers. The old ignorant, unambitious English yokel, for instance, had plenty of opportunities for giving way to his passion for singing. He sang at his work (plough-songs are very general) just as the women folk sang when "waulking" wool. I need hardly mention that "work-songs" of every description form a very considerable part of the music of primitive races the world over.

### LIFE ENCROACHING UPON ART

Not only does the commercial slavery of our civilization hold out to the average man insufficient leisure for the normal growth of the habit of artistic expression (unless he shows talents *exceptional* enough to warrant his becoming a professional artist) but the many decorums of modern society deny to most of us any very generous opportunities for using even our various (unartistic) life-instincts to the full; "*sich ausleben*" as the Germans so well put it. It is therefore not surprising that with us art frequently becomes the vehicle of expression for accumulated forces, thoughts and desires,

which, under less civilized conditions, more often find their normal outlet in actions. This state of things no doubt in part accounts for the desire of the composers of programme-music to cram their scores with passages reflecting psychological conflicts or depicting Fate or windmills or critics (I am not cavilling at this, for I adore Strauss's Symphonic Poems) and also accounts for the everlasting presence of erotic problems (of which Bernard Shaw has written so deliciously in his Prelude to "Plays for Puritans") in most modern literature.

#### ART ENCROACHING UPON LIFE

In short, with us moderns life is apt to encroach upon art, whereas with uneducated or primitive folk the reverse seems more often to be the case. Their lives, their speech, their manners, even their clothes all show the indelible impress of a superabundance of artistic impulses and interests. A modern Scandinavian has said of the old Norsemen: "They were always ready to throw away their lives for a witty saying"; and much the same literary attitude towards every-day speech may be observed in the queer old illiterate cronies from whom we get the English peasant songs or sea chanties. They show little or no keenness about money or desire to "better" themselves, but they love to be "wags," and crowd every moment of the day with quaint and humorous sayings and antics. When finishing a song they will add: "No harm done," or some equally abstract remark. One of the best folksingers I ever knew, who had had the varied career of ship's cook, brick-maker and coal merchant, won a prize ("a fine silver pencil") for dancing at the age of 54, performing to the playing of his brother, who was a "left-handed fiddler," i. e., bowed with his left hand, and fingered with his right. There is a ballad called 'Bold William Taylor' found all over Great Britain that tells how Sally Gray, abandoned by her faithless lover, William Taylor, dons "man's apparel" and follows him to the wars, where she is informed that "he's got married to an Irish lady," whereupon the two concluding verses run:

And then she called for a brace of pistols,  
A brace of pistols at her command;  
And there she shot bold William Taylor  
With his bride at his right hand.

And then the Captain was well pleased,  
Was well pleased what she had done;  
And then he made her a great commander  
Aboard of a ship, over all his men.

One of the best songsters I ever met, whose name happened to be Joseph Taylor (of Saxby-All-Saints, Lincolnshire) had picked up this ditty on a short absence from home when a young man. On his return he found his mother in bed and her new-born baby beside her. "What shall we call him?" he was asked, and being just then full of the newest addition to his repertoire of "ballets" (as they are called by the rural singers) he replied: "Christen him Bold William Taylor," and his advice was followed. I wonder how many babies of the educated classes have been named after a song?

H. G. Wells, the novelist, who was with me during a "folk-song hunt" in Gloucestershire, on noticing that I noted down not merely the music and dialect details of the songs, but also many characteristic scraps of banter that passed between the old agriculturalists around us, once said to me: "You are trying to do a more difficult thing than record folk-songs; you are trying to record life"; and I remember the whimsical, almost wistful, look which accompanied the remark.

But I felt then, as I feel now, that it was the superabundance of art in these men's lives, rather than any superabundance of life in their art, that made me so anxious to preserve their old saws and note their littlest habits; for I realized that the every-day events of their lives appealed to these dirty and magnificently ignorant rustics chiefly in so far as they offered them opportunities for displaying the abstract qualities of their inner natures (indeed, they showed comparatively small interest in the actual material results involved), and that their placid comments upon men and things so often preferred to adopt the unpassionate *formal* and *patterned* habits of "art" (so familiar to us in rural proverbs) rather than resemble the more passionate unordered behavior of inartistic "life."

#### PERSONAL OWNERSHIP OF SONGS

I need hardly say that natural artists of this order sing or play without self-consciousness of any kind, and anything resembling "stage-fright" seems unknown to them. When such a one refuses to let himself be heard, it is, more often than not, because he regards his tunes as purely *personal property*, and does not wish to part with them to others any more than he would with his pipe or his hat. I recall the case of a rustic singer, who, in his anxiety to acquire a song from a fellow-folksinger of this sort, had to hide himself in a cupboard in order to learn it, as its owner would never

have consented to sing it if he had dreamt his performance were being listened to by a rival; and I have myself had to get under a bed in order to note down the singing of an old woman equally chary of passing on her accomplishments to any "Tom, Dick or Harry."

This feeling of personal ownership of songs is still more strongly shown by many primitive non-European races, notably by the North American Indians. That inspired and inspiring collector of their music and devoted champion of their cause, Miss Natalie Curtis, wrote in an article, "The Perpetuating of Indian Art," in the "Outlook" of November 22, 1913: "Some songs are owned by families, even by individuals, and so highly do the Indians hold them that a man in dying may bequeath his own personal song to another, even as we bestow tangible possessions." Striking individual instances of this attitude on the part of the Indians will be found in the same author's touching and impressive tribute to aboriginal American life and art, "The Indians' Book" (Harper & Bros., New York).

THE IMPRESS OF PERSONALITY: UNWRITTEN MUSIC  
IS NOT STANDARDIZED

The primitive musician unhesitatingly alters the traditional material he has inherited from thousands of unknown talents and geniuses before him to suit his own voice or instruments, or to make it conform to his purely personal taste for rhythm and general style. There is no written original to confront him with, no universally accepted standard to criticize him by. He is at once an executive and creative artist, for he not only remoulds old ditties, but also weaves together fresh combinations of more or less familiar phrases, which he calls "making new songs." His product is local and does not have to bear comparison with similar efforts imported from elsewhere.

I once let an old Lincolnshire man (a perfect artist in his way) hear in my phonograph a variant of one of the songs he had sung to me as sung by another equally splendid folk-singer, and asked him if he didn't think it fine. His answer was typical: "I don't know about it's being fine or not; I only know it's *wrong*." To each singer his own versions of songs are the only correct ones.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which such traditional singers embellish so-called "simple melodies" with a regular riot of individualistic excrescences and idiosyncrasies of every kind, each detail of which, in the case of the most gifted

songsters at any rate, is a precious manifestation of real artistic personality; so much so that a skilled notator will often have to repeat a phonographic record of such a performance some hundreds of times before he will have succeeded in extracting from it a representative picture on paper of its baffling, profuse characteristics.

#### WHAT SEEMS VOCAL TO FOLK-SINGERS

Many of these singers retain the ringing freshness of their voices until such advanced ages as seventy years and over, when they still enjoy a command of certain phases of vocal technique which even our greatest art-singers might try (as they certainly will not do) in vain to imitate, notably an enormous range of staccato and pianissimo effects. They seldom aim at attempting anything resembling a genuine legato style, but use their breath, more as do some birds and animals, in short stabs and gushes of quickly contrasted, twittering, pattering and coughing sounds which (to my ears, at least) are as beautiful as they are amusing. Somewhat similar non-legato tendencies may be noted in the fiddling of British and Scandinavian peasants, who are as fond of twiddles and quirks as are the old singers, and do not try to exchange the "up and down" physical nature of the bow for the attainment of a continuous tone.

#### THE COMPLEXITY OF FOLK MUSIC

Returning to the folk-singers: rhythmical irregularities of every kind are everywhere in evidence, and the folk-scales in which their so-called "modal" melodies move are not finally fixed as are our art-scales, but abound with quickly alternating major and minor thirds, sharp and flat sevenths, and (more rarely) major and minor sixths, and whereas the sixth of the scale occurs usually merely as a passing note all the other intervals are attacked freely, either jumpingly from one to the other, or as initial notes in phrases.

At least, this is my experience after an exhaustive examination of my collection of close on 400 phonograph records of such tunes. Some singers evinced a rooted objection to singing more notes than syllables, and to avoid this add "nonsense syllables" to and in between their words (according to a definite system that seems to obtain throughout Great Britain) rather than "slur" two or more notes, occasioning such sentences as: "For to cree-oose (cruise) id-den (in) the chad-der-niddel (channel) of old Eng-ger-land's (England's) fame." The following scrap from one of the

"Marlborough" songs is typical of the ornate style of many English traditional singers:

Reynote

**FAST**

Now on a bed of sick-er-ness er lie, I  
am re - zy-den-ned ter die. You gen-ri ls aw - dell addend  
(resigned) (to) (generals) (all) (and)

cham-pi-ons er bold, stand true as weddell as I.  
(well)

**Faster**

**RITARD.**

etc.

#### ALL UNWRITTEN MUSIC EXHIBITS CERTAIN COMMON TRAITS

The whole art is in a constant state of flux; new details being continually added while old ones are abandoned. These general conditions prevail wherever unwritten music is found, and though I may never have heard Greenland or Red Indian music I feel pretty confident that as long as it is not too strongly influenced by the written music of our Western civilization it will evince on inspection much the same general symptoms as those displayed by the folk-music of British, Russian or Scandinavian peasants, or by natives of the South Seas, and we may always be sure that the singing of (let us say) an unsophisticated Lincolnshire agriculturalist of the old school will in essentials approximate more closely to that of Hottentots or other savages than it will to the art-music of an educated member of his own race living in a neighboring town.

#### COMMUNAL POLYPHONIC IMPROVISATION

Even when natives have been exposed to the influence of European music long enough to have acquired from it the habit of singing in parts, sometimes the unmistakable characteristics of unwritten music will survive to a surprising extent and color all their harmonic habits. This has been brought home to me very forcibly by five phonograph records of the improvised part-singing of Polynesian natives from Rarotonga in the South Seas, which have come into my possession through the warm generosity of a very remarkable collector, Mr. A. J. Knocks, of Otaki, North Island, New Zealand.

## DESCRIPTION OF RAROTONGAN PART-SINGING

These choral songs, which were sung as thank-offerings by the Rarotongans in return for gifts they received from the Maoris of Otaki, are more full of the joy of life than any other music (art or native) it has yet been my good fortune to hear, though they also abound in touching and wistful elements. The polyphony displayed by the four to eight singers was prodigious, and as the whole thing went prestissimo (Polynesian languages lend themselves very readily to speed) it reminded me of nothing so much as of a seething, squirming musical ant-hill, bursting into furious song for sheer joy and high spirits. No doubt the habit of harmony here displayed had been caught long ago from missionary hymns (Rarotonga was "converted" before many of the other islands of the South Seas), yet the use made by these brilliant musicians of their foreign accomplishment was completely native in its application and was throughout governed by the individualistic dictates of Unwritten Music. Their procedure followed habits rather than laws.

Each part-song consisted of a succession of small sections, each lasting some fifteen to twenty seconds, and separated one from the other by a brief moment of silence.

A short solo began each section, consisting of a curving, descending phrase, starting off on the fourth, fifth or sixth of the diatonic major scale and ending on the tonic below. As soon as the first singer reached the keynote the other voices would chime in, one after the other or in a bunch, according to the free choice of each individual concerned, while the first singer kept up a stirring hammering and highly rhythmic patter (which in the phonograph closely resembles the twang of banjos or rattle of small drums, though actually no instruments at all were used) on the tonic until the end of the section.

These other voices also sang curving, descending diatonic phrases (never twice quite alike, but always bearing a sort of family likeness to those of the first singer), which were repeated by each singer several times before the end of the section, which was heralded by a growing lassitude in all the voices—often fading away in an indolent sort of "dying duck" wail—whereas each new section was attacked in the most vigorous manner.

The various melodic lines as well as the whole character of the performance showed great variety during the course of a longish chain of such sections, while the harmonic and polyphonic happenings were kaleidoscopic in their everchanging aspects.

It will be seen that a great range of personal choice was left to all the members of this Rarotongan choir, in each of whom a highly complex, delicate and critical sense for ensemble was imperative. Each of these natives had to be a kind of improvising communal composer, and to a far greater degree simultaneously creative and executive than is the case with peasant songsters in Great Britain or Scandinavia, though a somewhat similar gift for complex improvised part-singing is displayed in the wonderful Russian choral folk-music so admirably collected and noted by Madame Lineff.

#### THE LACK OF HARMONIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Attractive as are the passionate warmth of vocal color, the savage exhilarating rattle of the rhythms, and the often almost wistful sweetness of the melodic phrases heard in this Rarotongan music, most fascinating of all to a modern composer are the Bach-like gems of everchanging, euphoniously discordant polyphonic harmony which throughout surprise, baffle and soothe the ear; patches of concords alternating with whole successions of discords—mainly seconds.

To us moderns the results of this free polyphony makes a seductive *complex harmonic appeal*, but I doubt very much if the Rarotongans themselves hear their own music in this way, and I am more inclined to believe that they attain their unique results precisely because their exceptionally developed individualistic polyphonic instincts are still free from the kind of harmonic consciousness which art-musicians have gradually built up through the centuries.

#### QUARTER TONES AND INEXACT UNISON

It is, of course, widely known that many races use quarter-tones and other divisions of the scale smaller than those hitherto in vogue in Europe, and Ferruccio Busoni's illuminating pamphlet "A New Esthetic of Music" contains some very clear-sighted suggestions for the use of third-tones and other close intervals—suggestions which I fondly hope the near future may see carried into practice.

My own experience with such small intervals has been in the "waiatas" and chants of the Maoris of New Zealand. Here all sorts of very close intervals are used in an indefinite, gliding sort of singing, which is very effective; but it is not my impression that these intervals are fixed as are those of our art-scales. When

several Maoris sing such chants together, great variations of intervals occur in the different voices, constituting a kind of "careless" or "inexact" unison also noticeable in Egyptian singing and pipe-playing and in much Eastern music, which has a charm all its own and might with great advantage be used in our art-music. In this sort of ensemble the musicians do not seem to make any attempt to attain an exact unison, and here also one is inclined to imagine that the ear of the native listener follows the path of each performer separately, and is not conscious of the discords that result from this "loose fit" in a harmonical or "horizontal" way, as we would be.

#### MUSICAL "TREASURE ISLANDS" IN THE PACIFIC AND THE RICHNESS OF AFRICAN RHYTHMS

The South Sea Islands must simply teem with complex improvised choral music, which, according to R. L. Stevenson, Pierre Loti, and many other sojourners in the "Gentle Isles," accompanies both their ceremonies and their most ordinary actions, and makes their every-day existence constantly melodious.

Africa appears to be the home of the richest developments of what may be termed "rhythmic polyphony," in which players upon every variety of drums and percussion instruments display in their treatment of intricately contrasted and independent rhythms a gift for communal improvisation comparable with that of Polynesian singers. Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, in his valuable and engrossing book on "Afro-American Folksongs," says of the war-dances of the Dahomans (pp. 64, 65):

Berlioz in his supremest effort with his army of drummers produced nothing to compare in artistic interest with the harmonious drumming of these savages.

Mr. Krehbiel's description of their music is exciting to a degree, and should be consulted in its entirety.

#### THE ELECTRIFYING "Clef Club of the CITY OF NEW YORK"

A distant echo of the habits of unwritten music can be traced in the marvelous accomplishments of the colored instrumentalists and singers who make up the New York "Clef Club," an organization which could not fail to electrify Europe if presented

there, and to hear which it is more than worth one's while to travel across the Atlantic. The compositions they interpret are art-music, and reveal the strict harmonic habits of the written art, but the ease with which those members of the Club who cannot read musical notation learn and remember intricate band and choral parts by heart (often singing tenor and playing bass) and many individualistic and rhapsodical traits in their performances suggest the presence of instincts inherited from the days of communal improvisation. These qualities are nowhere more in evidence than in their exhilarating renderings of two fascinating choral numbers by that strangely gifted American composer, Will Marion Cook—"Rain-song" and "Exhortation"—in themselves works of real genius and originality that deserve a worldwide reputation.

Musicians who have been thrilled by the passionate but always artistically refined percussion playing of the "Clef Club" can the more easily picture to themselves the overwhelming effect of the Dahoman drumming described by Mr. Krehbiel.

#### THE POSSIBILITIES OF MASSED DECLAMATION

The war-dances of the Maoris of New Zealand strike a certain note of savage, elemental force and passion which, it seems to me, is foreign to most European music with the exception of certain heroic and violent outbursts in Beethoven. These "hakas," as they are called, consist solely of spoken declamations of highly rhythmic poems for solo and chorus, accompanied by handclapping, weird quiverings of the body and threatening gestures and grimaces.

It is hard to realize that such simple means as these can be responsible for an impression so *musically* pregnant and emotionally overwhelming as that produced by these graceful ex-cannibals.

#### SOME OF THE LESSONS OF UNWRITTEN MUSIC

What life is to the writer, and nature to the painter, unwritten music is to many a composer: a kind of mirror of genuineness and naturalness. Through it alone can we come to know something of the incalculable variety of man's instincts for musical expression. From it alone can we glean some insight into what suggests itself as being "vocal" to natural singers whose technique has never been exposed to the influence of arbitrary "methods." In the reiterated physical actions of marching, rowing, reaping, dancing, cradle-rocking, etc., that called its work-songs, dance-music, ballads and

lullabies into life, we see before our very eyes the origin of the regular rhythms of our art-music and of poetic meters, and are also able to note how quickly these once so rigid rhythms give place to rich and wayward irregularities of every kind as soon as these bodily movements and gestures are abandoned and the music which originally existed but as an accompaniment to them continues independently as art for art's sake. In such examples as the Polynesian part-songs we can trace the early promptings of polyphony and the habits of concerted improvisation to their very source, and, since all composing is little else than "frozen inspiration," surely this latter experience is of supreme importance; the more so, if there again should dawn an age in which the bulk of civilized men and women will come to again possess sufficient mental leisure in their lives to enable them to devote themselves to artistic pleasures on so large a scale as do the members of uncivilized communities.

Then the spectacle of one composer producing music for thousands of musical drones (totally uncreative themselves, and hence comparatively out of touch with the whole phenomenon of artistic creation) will no longer seem normal or desirable, and then the present gulf between the mentality of composers and performers will be bridged.

#### THE TYRANNY OF THE COMPOSER

The fact that art-music has been written down instead of improvised has divided musical creators and executants into two quite separate classes; the former autocratic and the latter comparatively slavish. It has grown to be an important part of the office of the modern composer to leave as few loopholes as possible in his works for the idiosyncrasies of the performer. The considerable increase of exactness in our modes of notation and tempo and expression marks has all been directed toward this end, and though the state of things obtaining among trained musicians for several centuries has been productive of isolated geniuses of an exceptional greatness unthinkable under primitive conditions, it seems to me that it has done so at the expense of the artistry of millions of performers, and to the destruction of natural sympathy and understanding between them and the creative giants.

#### THE PRICE OF HARMONY

Perhaps it would not be amiss to examine the possible reason for the ancient tendency of cultured musicians gradually to discontinue

improvisation, and seek some explanation for the lack of variety with regard to scales, rhythms and dynamics displayed by our Western art-music when compared with the resources of more primitive men in these directions. I believe the birth of harmony in Europe to have been accountable for much; and truly, the acquisition of this most transcendental and soul-reaching of all our means of musical expression has been worth *any* and *every* sacrifice. We know how few combinations of intervals sounded euphonious to the pioneers of harmonic consciousness, and can imagine what concentration they must have brought to bear upon accuracies of notation and reliability of matters of pitch in ensemble; possibly to the exclusion of any very vital interest in individualistic traits in performance or in the more subtle possibilities of dynamics, color and irregular rhythms.

#### THE POSSIBILITIES OF "PURE LINE"

With the gradual growth of the all-engrossing chord-sense the power of deep emotional expression through the medium of an unaccompanied single melodic line would likewise tend to atrophy; which perhaps explains why many of those conversant with the strictly solo performances of some branches of unwritten music miss in the melodic invention of the greatest classical geniuses—passionately as they may adore their masterliness in other directions—the presence of a certain satisfying completeness (from the standpoint of pure line) that may often be noticed in the humblest folk-song.

It always seems to me strange that modern composers, with the example of Bach's Chaconne and Violin and 'Cello Sonatas as well as of much primitive music before them, do not more often feel tempted to express themselves extensively in single line or unison without harmonic accompaniment of any kind. I have found this a particularly delightful and inspiring medium to work in, and very refreshing after much preoccupation with richly polyphonic styles. Now that we have grown so skilful in our treatment of harmony that this side of our art often tends to outweigh all our other creative accomplishments, some of us feel the need of replenishing our somewhat impoverished resources of melody, rhythm and color, and accordingly turn, and seldom in vain, for inspiration and guidance to those untutored branches of our art that have never ceased to place their chief reliance in these elements. I have already referred to the possibilities of "inexact

unison" evinced by Maori and Egyptian music. Similar rich and varied lessons might be learned from Red Indian, East Indian, Javanese, Burmese, and many other Far Eastern musics.

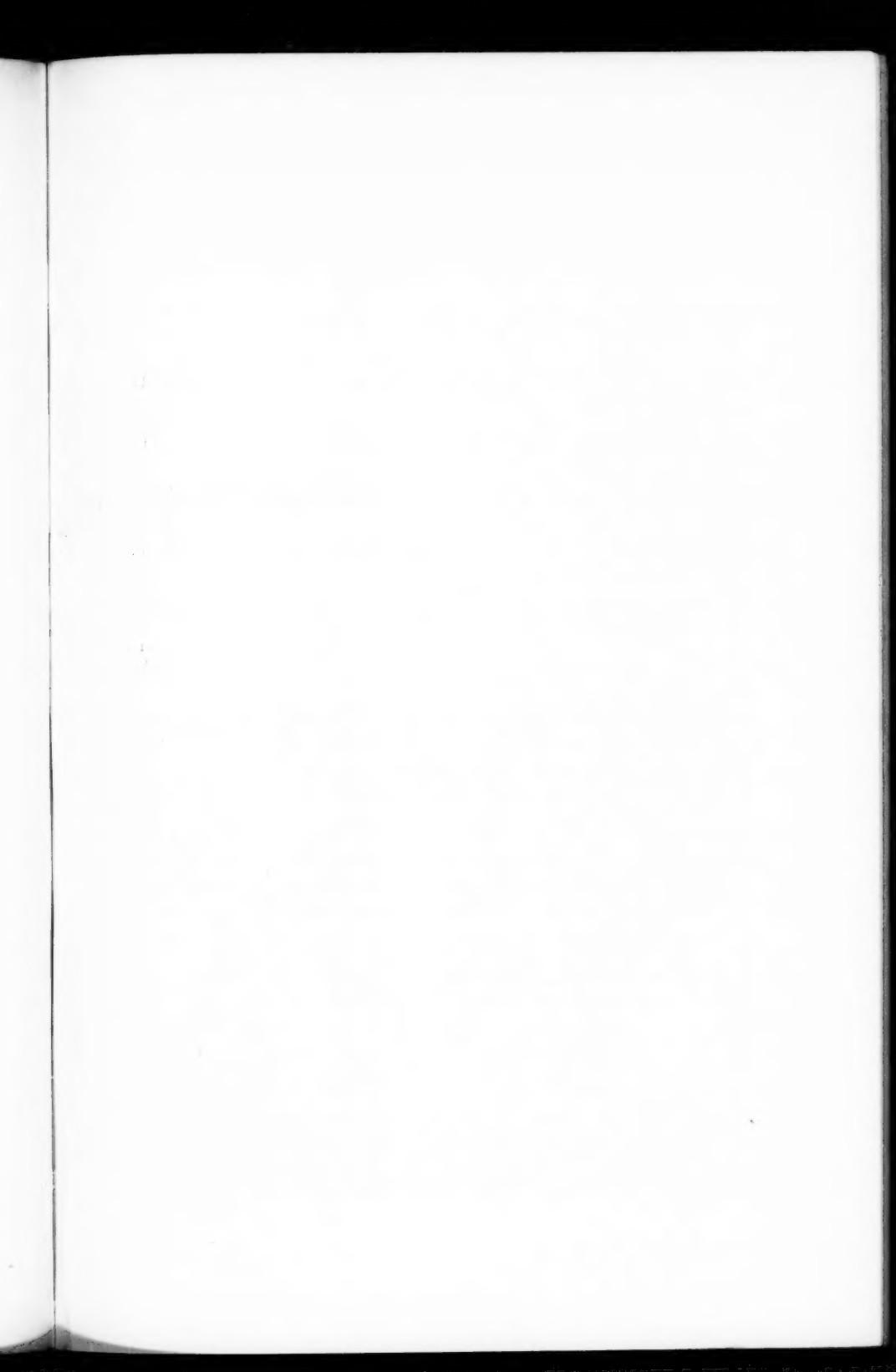
#### OUR SPROUTING POWERS OF APPRECIATION

Being, moreover, the fortunate heirs to the results of those centuries of harmonic experiment in which ever more and more discordant combinations of intervals came to be regarded as concordant, we are now at last in a position from which we can approach such music as the Rarotongan part-songs and similar music of a highly complex discordant nature with that broad-minded toleration and enthusiastic appreciation which our painters and writers brought to bear on the arts of non-Europeans so many generations before our musicians could boast of an equally humble, cultured and detached attitude.

#### THE MODERN TENDENCY TO TAKE "HINTS"

Out in nature, however, men have long known how to enjoy discordant combinations. A telegraph wire humming B flat, a bird piping a flat B natural and factory whistles chiming in with notes resembling D and F sharp; the mournful appeal of such accidental ensembles has frequently awakened emotional response. But a musician in 1890 would have been inclined to enjoy such sounds as merely part of "nature" and with no bearing upon his "art," whereas we to-day are more apt to find compositional hints in such occurrences; not, I most sincerely hope, because we have any desire to "copy nature," or because we could willingly contemplate exchanging, for however brief a moment, the precise choice and formal arrangement of artistic procedure for the choicelessness of "life," but simply because a greater number of discordant harmonic combinations happen to charm our ears to-day than they did in 1890.

Probably Beethoven was one of the first of the "moderns" to find such suggestions in every-day sounds. The trumpet behind the stage in the third "Leonora" seems an instance of this, while the premature entry of the horn in the first movement of the "Eroica" and the belated notes of the bassoon in the Scherzo of the "Pastoral" show his generous readiness to perpetuate in his scores hints derived from the mistakes of the rehearsal room and the happy-go-lucky ensemble of tavern "Musikanten."



Excerpt from "Random Round" by Percy Grainger

Gran' Gitarre 2. 5.

Altemptone  
Mandoline

Cello  
Violin  
Bell

Drum  
Cello  
Violin  
Guitar

Piano +  
Guitar

#### HARMONIC EMANCIPATIONS

Nowadays we not only hear whole sequences of what would formerly have been considered impossibly harsh discords with rare delight, especially when they are as poetically treated and as delicately scored as they are in Schönberg's "Five orchestral pieces," but we are able to listen to two pianists simultaneously improvising passages of chords in different keys on two pianos, each quite independently of the other and to enjoy the crossing paths of these chord-groups in much the same way as we appreciate the intertwining of single parts in older music. Here is an instance of such freely moving chord-groups: (*See facsimile.*)

Two entrancing examples of this pleasure in "double-chording" may be studied in Ravel's "Le Gibet" (in which passages in A major and modulations bristling with G sharps, A naturals, B naturals and C naturals pass over and under and through a continuous bell-like organ-point on B flat [A sharp] in the middle of the keyboard which is heard chiming from the beginning to the end of this pianistic gem) and in that famous passage in Strauss' "Rosenkavalier" which accompanies the entry of the silver rose and occurs again at the close of the final duet, in which strings and voices sustain the tonic and major third while a slow cascade of foreign and remote chords of every degree of concordance and discordance are given out by flutes, harp and celesta; constituting, to my mind, a stroke of the highest genius and accounting for one of the tenderest and most touching effects ever conceived.

#### THE "WRONG NOTE CRAZE" SUCCEEDS THE "RIGHT NOTE CRAZE"

Modern geniuses and primitive music unite in teaching us the charm of "wrong notes that sound right." Indeed, Frederick Delius has aptly referred to the wave of discord that is at present sweeping over the world of civilized music as "the wrong note craze." The innovations of such pioneers as Debussy, Ravel, Strauss, Schönberg, Stravinsky, Cyril Scott and Ornstein open up the possibility of modern musicians being capable of combining the communal improvisation of South Sea Islanders with the harmonic consciousness of our written art-music.

#### AN EXPERIMENT IN CONCERTED PARTIAL IMPROVISATION

Realizing this, I set out, some three years ago, to embody some of the experience I had gleaned from familiarity with the

primitive polyphony of the Rarotongan part-songs in a composition entitled "Random Round," which was planned for a few voices, guitars and mandolins, to which could be added (if available) mandola, piano, xylophone, celesta, glockenspiel, resonaphone or marimbaphone, strings and wind instruments. It consisted of sections (A, B, C, etc.), each of which was again divided into as many as 10 to 20 variants (A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, etc.), some quiet, some noisy, some simple, some complex; each bar of each variant being composed in such a manner that it would form some sort of a harmonic whole when performed together with any bar of any or all of the other variants of the same section.

The guitars formed the background for all the rest, and as soon as they got going with section A any or all of the other players and singers could fall in, when and how they pleased, with any of their variants of section A, provided their beats corresponded to those of the guitars. For instance, one voice might be heard singing the second measure of its A<sub>3</sub> while another voice was engaged on the seventh measure of its A<sub>9</sub>. Before section B was to begin, a Javanese gong would be beaten, whereupon the same sort of canonical intermingling of the different variants of B would be undertaken that had just occurred with the A variants; and so on with C, D, etc., to the end.

It will be seen that a fairly large range of personal choice was allowed to every one taking part, and that the effectiveness of the whole thing would depend primarily on the natural sense for contrasts of form, color and dynamics displayed by the various performers, and their judgment in entering and leaving the general ensemble at suitable moments.

Thus one player, by intruding carelessly and noisily at a moment when all the rest were playing softly, would wreck that particular effect, though, on the other hand, such an act, if undertaken intentionally in order to provide dynamic variety, might be very welcome. Last summer in London some fifteen of us experimented with this "Random Round," and the results obtained were very instructive to me personally. Several of those taking part quickly developed the power of merging themselves into the artistic whole, and whereas at the outset the monotonous babel produced somewhat "resembled a day at the Dog's Home, Battersea" (as a leading critic once described Albeniz' marvelous and touching piano piece "Jerez" when I first introduced it to London audiences some years ago), after a little practice together the whole thing took on form, color and clarity, and sounded harmonious enough, though a frequent swash of passing discords was



Excerpt from a March for Piano and Orchestra by Percy Grainger

Woodwind  
Piano forte  
F sharp

Trumpets  
Trombones  
4 Horns  
Trombones  
Strings  
Creak

This is a handwritten musical score for a march, likely for piano and orchestra. The score is organized into four systems of music. The first system features woodwind parts (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon) and a piano part. The piano part includes dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'gran'. The second system features brass parts (trumpets, trombones) and a piano part. The third system features brass parts (trombones) and a piano part. The fourth system features brass parts (trombones) and a piano part. The score is written on five-line staves with various clefs (G, F, C) and key signatures (F major, G major, C major). The tempo is marked as 'March'.

noticeable also. I look forward to some day presenting to English and American audiences a performance of this blend of modern harmonic tendencies with experiences drawn from the improvised polyphony of primitive music, although, of course, my piece represents only the veriest beginnings of what may ultimately be evolved in the realms of concerted improvisation.

In the meantime I cannot refrain from giving a tiny example of the sort of combinations that resulted from the individualistic use on the part of the various performers of the somewhat elastic material I had provided them with, remarking, however, that the effect of the actual performance was far warmer and less harsh than it appears on paper, largely owing to the transparent quality of the plucked sounds of the guitars, mandolins and mandolas, and the illusive and "non-adhesive" tone of the brighter percussion instruments. (*See facsimile.*)

**PRIMITIVE MUSIC IS A CLOSED BOOK  
TO MOST MUSICIANS**

When we consider how meagre the generally available records of unwritten music are, it is surprising that it should have already exerted so noticeable an influence upon contemporaneous composers.

Experience of primitive music is not in any way thrust upon the budding musician. When I was a boy in Frankfort my teacher wanted me to enter for (I think it was) the Mendelssohn Prize for piano playing, and I remember asking him: "If I should win, would they let me study Chinese music in China with the money?" And his reply: "No, they don't give prizes to idiots." No doubt many a young musician is feeling to-day what I felt then—a longing to escape from the inefficiencies of theoretic teaching and to know something about the myriad musics of the various races, and to be able to track some of the creative impulses to their sources. But he will not find much exhaustive material accessible. For instance, though it may be already widely appreciated how much such delicious pieces as Debussy's "Pagodes" and "Reflets dans l'eau" (and indeed, the whole modern French school) owe to some acquaintance with Javanese music yet we still have to journey to the Dutch Indies if we wish to hear the "gamalan."

**LET ALL THE WORLD HEAR  
ALL THE WORLD'S MUSIC**

But I believe the time will soon be ripe for the formation of a world-wide International Musical Society for the purpose of making

all the world's music known to all the world by means of imported performances, phonograph and gramophone records and adequate notations. Quite small but representative troupes of peasant and native musicians, dancers, etc., could be set in motion on "world tours" to perform in the subscription concerts of such a society in the art-centres of all lands. One program might consist of Norwegian fiddling, pipe-playing, cattle-calls, peasant dances and ballad singing, another of various types of African drumming, marimba and zanze playing, choral songs and war dances, and yet another evening filled out with the teeming varieties of modes of singing and playing upon plucked string instruments indigenous to British India; and so on, until music-lovers everywhere could form some accurate conception of the as yet but dimly guessed multitudinous beauties of the world's contemporaneous total output of music.

#### OUR DEBT TO THE PAST AND OUR DUTY TO THE FUTURE

Quite apart from the pleasure and veneration such exotic arts inspire purely for their own sake, those of us who are genuinely convinced that many of the greatest modern composers (by no means all, however—not Schönberg or Strauss or Fauré, for instance) owe much to their contact with one kind or other of unwritten music, must, if we wish to behave with any generosity toward the future, face the fact that coming generations will not enjoy a first-hand experience of primitive music such as those amongst us can still obtain who are gifted with means, leisure, or fighting enthusiasm. Let us therefore not neglect to provide composers and students to come with the best *second-hand* material we can. Fortunes might be spent, and well spent, in having good gramophone and phonograph records taken of music from everywhere, and in having the contents of these records noted down by brilliant yet painstaking musicians; men capable of responding to unexpected novelties and eager to seize upon and preserve *in their full strangeness and otherness* just those elements that have least in common with our own music. We see on all hands the victorious on-march of our ruthless Western civilization (so destructively intolerant in its colonial phase) and the distressing spectacle of the gentle but complex native arts wilting before its irresistible simplicity.

Everywhere men and women whose forebears were untaught individualistic musicians are inevitably finding their own expression

(or not finding any at all) along the more precise and sometimes narrow paths of the written art. Soon, or comparatively soon, folk-music on Southern plantations, or in Scandinavia, Great Britain, Russia and Spain will be as dead as it already is in Holland and Germany, and many native races will have exchanged their song-lit "savage" modes of living for the (musically speaking) comparatively silent early stages of "commercial prosperity" or commercial want. Against that day—which, however, we may confidently expect to find compensatingly more gloriously rich in art-music than any previous age—let us make noble efforts to preserve, for the affectionate gaze of future eclectics, above all adequate printed records of what now still remains of a phase of music which, in the nature of things, can never be reborn again, and which comes down to us so fragrant with the sweet impress of the personality of many millions of unknown departed artists, men and women.

## OPERA AS A "SPECTACLE FOR THE EYE"

By FAUSTO TORREFRANCA

HISTORIANS of music, when speaking of an opera-libretto of the seventeenth century, generally have in mind that scenic complex of dramatic absurdities and sentimental banalities which, after straying from the path of the refined and Hellenistic libretto followed by Rinuccini or Salvatori, and after losing itself later in the labyrinth of a revival of historic deeds and personages, was beginning—toward the end of the century—to be reformed by Apostolo Zeno. This is the pith of all that we know concerning this artistic product. And it is not enough; because, in my opinion, the libretto ought to form the foundation of the history of opera—more especially, as I shall show, in the seventeenth century. However, such is, naturally, not yet the case; for historians approaching this subject find themselves confronted by one of the most difficult problems which the history of Italian literature can present. And being, for the most part, not Italians, and having (except in rare instances) no thorough knowledge of our country's language and literature, they have subconsciously decided the question in the manner which struck them as most obvious and easy. However conscientious and serene it may be, there is no mind which, when confronted by problems of too great complexity and demanding immediate solution, is not prompted to do them violence, quite unconsciously, in order to simplify them and subject them to a clear and comprehensive systematization.

Thus it has been observed, and not without acumen, that the seventeenth-century libretto *in toto* might be reduced to an elementary formula which we shall simplify still further: The personage A loves the personage B, who, in turn, loves C; continuing similarly till the final X is reached, who, naturally, loves the initial A. The complications which may result do not alter in the least the fundamental banality and absurdity of this scheme; nor does the latter prevent the final solution from being the best possible in the best of possible worlds—the so-called "happy ending." This observation is exact; but it can only serve to prove that the libretto of the seventeenth century affords but meagre

human interest, or, to put it more plainly, psychological interest. And this, after all, very naturally; for these librettists were neither romantics nor the sons of romantics. But that does not preclude their work from furnishing an interest of another sort and of a highly esthetic nature.

Let us turn to another observation which has been made, and frequently repeated, about the seventeenth-century libretto. It has been said that, in the hands of the Venetians, in theatres nearly all of which were built by the great dogal families and by them thrown open to the public (such as the [Teatro] Grimano of S. Giovanni Grisostomo, the Vendramino of S. Salvatore, the theatre of the family of Tron di S. Cassiano, the Giustinianio di S. Moisè, and others), the *favola per musica*, with its mythological and therefore aristocratic plot, became the "opera," with its historical and therefore popular plot.

But this observation has a wholly secondary and collateral value. In point of fact, I shall show that this predilection for historical plots derived simply from the circumstance that they brought into prominence the most vital element of seventeenth-century opera, namely, the picturesque and mechanical (or, in one word, plastic) element which was manifested in the luxury of scenic decorations, in the richness and variety of the settings, in the extravagance of flying mechanisms, etc. Hence those are mistaken who believe that the transition from the myth to history denotes a tendency, in the libretto, toward a more psychological and realistical content. To convince one's self of the contrary, one has only to read any such work of the period between 1550 and 1590. On the other hand, the historians have not perceived that the abandonment of mythological plots in favor of historical ones, although it is an indication of the predominant importance of the scenic element in the opera, likewise includes a genuine and characteristic reaction against the tenuous, academic Hellenism of the Florentines, and (as will be proved) constitutes a kind of miniature *Sturm und Drang* of the *opera in musica* in opposition to the famous Aristotelian law of the unities in time, place, and action; etc. Such a *Sturm und Drang*, let it be understood, as the seventeenth century could afford; one which in itself was, at bottom, as academic and literary as the Hellenism that it opposed, but which, all the same, rested upon an absolutely Italian base of culture—a plastic culture. The opera of the seventeenth century is not, in fact, classic in the sense affirmed by Dent, who is, by the way, the sole author who has perceived, after a fashion, the importance (but not the predominance) of the scenic element in opera,

at least with regard to the period of Scarlatti. It is, on the contrary, anti-classic; that is, a reaction against the antiquarian classicism of the Florentines.

Finally, it has also been observed that the characters in the libretto with an historical base are totally unhistorical in their language, their customs and their actions—in everything, except their names. Not even their garb was historical; in this matter the costumers of the time permitted themselves the most absurd liberties. All this, too, has been exaggerated in the condemnation proceeding from the modern (and, because modern, wrong) point of view concerning historical revivals; and it has not been noticed that the majority of the libretti take care to distinguish the historical portion from the fantastic in the "Arguments" prefixed to the poetic texts—a sign that the poets knew what they were doing. But it was, in reality, hardly worth while to make note of such an obvious fact, for it is perfectly natural; there being no reason whatever why these characters should be different from the mythological personages of whom we have already spoken. Both are children of the same period; and that period had neither the eyes, nor the feelings, nor the nerves, to appreciate what we term the "psychology" of the dramatic person.

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Thus the seventeenth-century libretto presents a very slight psychological and dramatic interest. And the historians, who as yet have neither thought out nor divined what is the real foundation of the *opera in musica* (namely, scenography), and what served to render it popular, have all been led to wreak themselves on the music for the delusion suffered on reading certain libretti of that period.<sup>1</sup> And because the *opera in musica* arose (or, at least, is said to have arisen) with and from a musical innovation—the so-called invention of the song for one voice (monody) in contradistinction to song for several voices (the madrigal)—they said: Here we have the truly human element in the seventeenth-century opera—the music; monody. But this is an illusion produced by their romantic culture, more or less impregnated with Wagnerian prejudices. That same Monteverdi whom they exalt so high (and as might be expected, as a seventeenth-century Wagner!) was, to my thinking, far greater as a writer of madrigals and

<sup>1</sup> I say certain, rather than many, because the history of the libretto is still to be written, and the historians of music are acquainted with it only at second hand—either through historians of literature (Belloni, Solerti, etc.), or through a few *résumés* furnished by Ambros (Vol. IV).

*canzonette* (these latter often monodic) than as an opera-composer.

I shall be confronted with the unique "Lament of Arianna"; but this is, after all, such an isolated and exceptional case<sup>1</sup> that G. B. Doni himself considered it "the very principal part (of 'Arianna'), and perhaps the loveliest composition of our time in this style," whereas he thought the other operas of the period "of lesser worth." But this very lament is a further proof of the fact that the monody of the seventeenth century inclined toward a realization of abstract sentiments, rather than feelings ascribed to some dramatic personality, expressing them by musical exclamations and by cadences imitating those of emotional speech. In this its strength and its universal character are rooted; but herein also lies its dramatic weakness, characteristically Italian. The lament of Arianna, which did not fail to be sung in every house where there was a cembalo or a theorbo,<sup>2</sup> is inapproachable in style as a lament, and remained an unsurpassed model for its epoch. But, if we would consider it as an expression of Arianna's grief when abandoned by Teseo (that is, from an individualistic, romantic, modern point of view), it suddenly seems decidedly weak. Its sentimental and realistic value is great, but its dramatic value is very slight. For the words most strongly accentuated by the music are those in the outcry "Lasciatemi morire!" (which is wholly instinctive), and not those others which ought to have brought out musically what we call to-day the "psychological situation."

In conclusion, while deferring to a more fitting opportunity the complete historic and esthetic demonstration, I do not hesitate to affirm that the musical content of the melodrama, if thus examined by and for itself, does not possess the value which writers have liked to attribute to it. And this was, for the rest, a reflected value, not an immediate one, and hence better appreciated by the intellectuals of the period than by the general public—at least until Cavalli began to compose music evidently inspired by models (dances, more especially) which the various species of *canzoni* for solo voice, and of music for the lute, had made common property. Let us not deceive ourselves; seventeenth-century opera-music had much the same importance as the music which to-day accompanies the devolution of kinematographic films. That is to say, it was meant to be suggestive rather than dramatic, entertaining rather than emotional; and, above all, it had to be easily and instantly comprehensible. And the people had a craving for

<sup>1</sup> See G. B. Doni's "Trattato della Musica Scenica," Cap. IX; in Solerti, "Origini del Melodramma," p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Bonini, "Discorsi e Regole sopra la Musica," in Solerti, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

easy and instinctive music, precisely because they themselves no longer succeeded in creating such. Indeed, I believe the fact has not received due notice that, whereas in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we know that the musical life of the people was most vigorous, and while, in the sixteenth century, we find a whole literature of popular origin (that of the *villanelle*), in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the musical originality of the people diminished. And exactly during this period the opera provided them with a substitute for that which they could no longer create; and the operatic forms speedily became models whence popular song drew its inspiration, as in the *villote* (folk-songs in several parts), and the *canzonette di battello* (boat-songs). This came to pass when monodic song completed its transformation into *musica ariosa*, or the *aria*: terms which had, for the contemporary mind, no further signification than *canzonetta a ballo* (dance-song).<sup>1</sup>

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But monody possessed a far higher importance from the standpoint of scenic technics. And it is this peculiar importance—which the historians have not yet thought to set in proper relief—that we conceive to be fundamental: as having made the musical drama possible. Meanwhile, this song for solo voice permitted a character to be self-sustaining, even musically, and not to require the support of other voices, nor to be obliged, like the characters in Vecchi's 'Anfiparnaso,' to abstain from appearing on the stage. This last predicament would for ever have barred the way to the spread of the *opera in musica*, because (as cannot be too often repeated) the Italian people of that period had not yet arrived at the status of a nation of musical persons, of *auditors*, but formed a population educated esthetically by the plastic arts rather than by music, a nation of *visualists*.

However, monody—or, preferably, all the styles of music included in this form, so opportune for the scenic realization of the actor-singer—had a further high value from the viewpoint of the scenic movement. And the theatre-folk immediately became aware of this value. In fact, the "social" career of the *favola per musica* had hardly begun with the opening, to the paying public, of the first Venetian theatre of S. Cassiano (1637), when the librettist of Sacrauti's 'L'Ulisse Errante,' the Venetian patrician

<sup>1</sup> See Giulio Caccini, Preface to "Le Nuove Musiche," in Solerti, *op. cit.*, and also compare two passages on pp. 58 and 65.

Giacomo Badoaro, did not hesitate to assert, when writing a generic criticism (already by this time a criticism!) of the Opera, that "to allow more time for the Changes of Scene we have introduced Music in which we cannot escape an inverisimilitude" (page 12). And he adds, that another inverisimilitude in opera was the singing of two or three persons together. Fifty years before Saint-Evremond, the critique of the opera, and more particularly of song for solo voice and for several voices together, had been written from the realistic viewpoint of "verisimilitude!" So it is quite natural that Badoaro, convinced of the supreme importance of the scenic decorations over all else, should mention (on page 17) the scenographer of his '*Ulisse Errante*,' and speak of him in this wise: "We have for our manager of machines and of scenes our most ingenious Torelli, who, by his incomparable services in years past, has won universal gratitude and popularity." Just before him, to be sure, he mentions the musician Sacrati (whom we know to have been one of the best of his time, although all his music has been lost); but he does so in terms which, however courteous, are far below the superlatives chosen for Torelli: "We enjoy in his stead [that is, instead of Claudio Monteverdi, who had died some time previous] the glorious efforts of Signor Francesco Sacrati; and of a truth it was needful that, to behold the splendors of this Moon, that Sun [Monteverdi] should first have set."

Let us take note, too, that these first years of the public theatre at Venice were certainly one of the most splendid periods of seventeenth-century stage-setting. However, as Badoaro points out, Torelli had already been engaged in Venice for several years; we know, in fact, that he had mounted '*La Finta Pazza*' in 1641, '*Bellerofonte*' in 1642, and '*La Venere Gelosa*' in 1643. The scenes of '*La Finta Pazza*' may still be viewed among the engravings in the Cabinet of Prints in the National Gallery at Paris and the Galleria Corsini at Rome; those of '*Bellerofonte*' were inserted in the libretto, as was then the custom, and are preserved in Paris (Res. Yd. 55) in a copy which perhaps is unique; and some in the '*Venere Gelosa*', reprinted in Paris, are also to be found in the Cabinet of Prints at Paris (Tbb. 1), and are often offered for sale both in ink and in colors, adorned with titles and stage-directions. Some of these appear to be identical with those of '*La Finta Pazza*', in all but a few unimportant details. It is entirely possible that the expense of the scenic preparations prompted the directors of the *Novissimo* to adapt at least some scenes in '*La Finta Pazza*' for '*La Venere Gelosa*'. This very thing was done at Paris when the stage-settings of '*Orfeo*', by Luigi Rossi, which had been devised

by the aforesaid Torelli, were adapted for Corneille's 'Andromède.' In fact, the scenes in 'La Finta Pazza' had gained such celebrity that Cardinal Mazzarini was moved to call Torelli to Paris and entrust to him the mounting of Rossi's 'Orfeo' and Caproli's 'Nozze di Teti e di Peleo.' Concerning Torelli's sojourn in Paris, Prunières<sup>1</sup> furnishes many interesting documents; which relieves me of the necessity to speak of it more at length.

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We may find confirmation of the importance of scenography and the scenographer in the fact that, from the very beginnings of public stage-plays in Venice, we note three scenographers who are explicitly mentioned in the libretti. Among the best of the many celebrities which the century could boast were two: Giovanni Burnacini, the father of Ludovico, the scenographer of 'Il Pomo d'Oro' (Vienna, 1666), and Torelli; while the third was a certain Gasparo Beccari, the scenographer of 'La Ninfa Avara' and 'L'Amore Innamorato' (theatre of S. Moisè). But above all others, the spectacles produced in the theatre of SS. Giovanni e Paolo were long cherished in the memory of the Venetians, since De Boni, Ivanovich, *et al.*, kept them in remembrance. Ivanovich, the author of the earliest "Memorie teatrali di Venezia" now extant,<sup>2</sup> though he barely mentions the other theatres, discourses thus eloquently touching the theatre of SS. Giovanni e Paolo:

In this theatre are produced, during the Carnival, musical works with marvellous changes of scene, majestic pageants, the finest machinery, and miraculous flights, while one may generally view the splendors of the Heavens, Deities, Seas, Kingdoms, Palaces, Groves, Forests, and other beauteous and delightful displays. The Music is always exquisite, selection being made from the best voices of the City, and bringing others from Rome, Germany, and other places, especially women, who with their beauty of face, the richness of their costumes, the charm of their singing, and the action proper to the personages whom they represent, cause amazement and admiration. The effects are similar in the theatres of S. Salvatore and S. Cassiano.

And on page 388, comparing the theatres of Venice with those of ancient Rome, Ivanovich proves that he, like all his contemporaries, perfectly understands wherein the difference existing between these two epochs actually lies: that is to say, not at all

<sup>1</sup> H. Prunières, "L'Opéra en France avant Lully." Paris, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> See Minerva al Tavolino, at end of book.

in the effect of the *nuove musiche*, but most decidedly in the mode of employing the scenographic art. He remarks, in fact:

So to-day theatrical performances with music have been introduced as a solace for the spirit, and as a most artistic recreation wherein are displayed Machines of great ingenuity, suggested by the Drama, forming a grand attraction amid the Pomp of the Scenes, and costumes, which gratify in full the universal curiosity. Thus there have been seen, on the stage, real Elephants, live Camels, Chariots drawn majestically by Wild Beasts and by Horses, Horses likewise in the Air, Horses which dance, the most superb Machines, displayed in the air, on the ground, on the sea with extravagant contrivances, and with admirable inventions to bring down from the Air Royal Halls, with all the Personages, and Musicians, as illuminated by nighttime, and to make them reascend in most astounding fashion, and a thousand other things, which being printed in the Dramas, it is superfluous to describe them with particularity, all persons being able to inform themselves fully by reading the same, which will serve as a pleasing and at the same time profitable diversion for *Geni virtuosi* [or, as we should say to-day, the intellectuals].

These quotations from Ivanovich will show that it was thus early recognized that the perusal of the libretti evoked visions of scenico-plastic display (or, of plastic virtuosity) rather than poetic images;—a fact which adds weight to my thesis, and all the more because no mention whatsoever is made of the importance of the music—which we, wrongly, suppose to have been great. Ivanovich, it should be noted, was no non-professional in the life of the theatre, being the author of sundry libretti, some of which he himself names: 'L'Amor Guerriero,' 'La Circe,' 'Il Coriolano,' 'La Costanza Trionfante'; consequently, his observations have a very material historic and psychological value.

We shall not dwell on the importance ascribed by him to the scenographic element; that stands out clearly from the context. But notice the importance of the phrase "the Music is always exquisite, selection being made from the best voices." The exquisiteness of the music—and, in the language of the period, *isquisitezza* has nearly the same meaning as *grazia* for the Florentines of the earliest melodramas,<sup>1</sup> that is to say, ingratiating force and inspiration at one and the same time—this exquisiteness is a characteristic emanating from the voices, or depending on the interpreters. The composers of the music are not even named. Nor is this all; beauty of face and richness of the costumes present themselves to the writer's mind in precedence to the "charm of the singing" and the acting; such was the importance then

<sup>1</sup> See the adaptations of Peri by Caccini, the essay by Della Valle, and the other documents published in Solerti, *op. cit., passim*.

attached to everything decorative, conspicuous, sensuous. Theatre-goers went to see beautiful scenes and beautiful women, and to hear beautiful voices. The libretto was the peg on which to hang "scenes" and "changes of scene"; whereas the music served to bring out beautiful voices. And, while discussing this point, it should be observed that there was not one famous and popular opera of the seventeenth century which, during its peregrinations, did not suffer modifications in the libretto and the music (more frequently in the latter than the former), either, as the phrase went, "to adapt it to the present taste," or to "satisfy the taste of messieurs the musicians." And this "taste" signifies nothing but caprice, pretext, pose, fashion. '*Dori*,' '*Giasone*,' '*Alessandro vincitor di sè stesso*,' etc., etc., all shared this fate, as may be traced in the successive editions of the libretti. But we can rest assured that these cases represent only a very small part of those which actually occurred, and which, so to say, escaped publication.

The audiences, then, were so little exacting in musical matters (even in the case of well-known and oft-repeated operas), that they were not in the least disturbed by the alterations inflicted on the musical text by the hands of (not infrequently) second-rate composers. On the contrary, we can boldly assert that they took pleasure in them. It were useless to be scandalized by this, and wrong to make the deduction that the level of musical culture was then very low. Unquestionably, it was not so high as in the sixteenth century. Still, one ought to call it different, rather than lower. The musical culture of the sixteenth century was an aristocratic culture; the dilettanti of that period, both men and women, were accomplished musicians; they could read a madrigal at sight, accompany a solo voice on the lute with a sight-arrangement of the other parts for the instrument, or execute extemporized *diminuzioni* and variations. But it must be remarked that they were, for the most part, gentlemen and gentlewomen of the courts.<sup>1</sup> The common people had their own popular songs—those popular songs whereof we see a clear reflection in the *frottola*, and in that more distinctively sixteenth-century product, the *villanelle*. Besides, they listened with devotion and respect (possibly not lacking in a certain obtuseness) to the music which accompanied the sacred ritual in the churches—the organ-music of a Gabrieli or a Luzzaschi, and the vocal compositions of a Palestrina or a Nanini. But in the seventeenth century the musical culture of the courts was on the wane (so we are assured, for example, by

See B. Castiglioni, "Il Cortegiano," Lib. II, § XI-XIII.

Giustiniani), and music, through the medium of opera, began to hold sway over the people in an easy and seductive form, precisely because it was supported by scenographic and choreographic spectacles of great magnificence, and by the spell of exquisite voices, lovely forms, and rich costumes. The level of seventeenth-century musical culture was, therefore, as compared with that of the sixteenth century, neither higher nor lower, but merely different. In reality, it is impossible to institute a comparison between two epochs so diverse the one from the other. The reason for this circumstance is not simply musical, but general, and it does not properly belong to the history of music, but rather to that of general culture. In fact, while the sixteenth century was still attuned to the grace, to the eurythmy, to the transparency wherein, for instance, the paintings of the fifteenth century found their inspiration, the seventeenth turns wholly toward a new principle—the principle of boldness of movement, of restlessness, whose realization we view in baroque architecture and the paintings of the Bolognese school. Every species of mutation or transformation was sure to please. Variety had become the patroness of Art. And thus scenography became, in its turn, the true Muse of the melodramatic stage.

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The public, which did not require much of its favorite composers (it sufficed if the music moved them more or less and suited the singers, and was calculated to show off the beauty and agility of the voices), was, on the other hand, very exacting in the matter of scenography—precisely because the stage-settings gave them an opportunity to raise hymns and burn incense to the goddess of the period: Variety.

Variety required that the characters should be numerous; there were no less than thirty-three in the opera 'Le Fatiche d'Ercole per Deianira,' the libretto by Aurelio Aureli, set to music by P. A. Ziani, and produced in the Teatro Grimano in 1662. It presents allegorical personages, gods, demigods, heroes, and—as if this were not enough—this vast Olympus is encircled by seven full choruses. Twenty-five years of social existence had sufficed to make of the opera nothing but a "spectacle for the eye," enhanced by song and sound. If eighteenth-century opera could be called a "concert" constituted of a series of arias and ensemble-pieces interrupted by long recitatives, the opera of the seventeenth

century should be considered as a "spectacle." When the opera is for the eyes, the music occupies second place. Aureli himself confirms this by words whose meaning is indisputable; for, after taking such pains to set in motion so great an array of characters, he feels the need of asking the indulgence of the public in the few traditional lines dedicated by "The Author to the Reader" (page 5):

At the present time the people of the City of Venice are become so fastidious in their taste for the Drama that they no longer know that they desire to see [N.B., not to hear], nor can the intellect of the author devise any invention to win himself the applause of the spectators, or to meet the wishes of the greater part (it being impossible to please all).

One extremely curious detail occurs in the citation which follows; it shows clearly how erroneous is the opinion held by those who think that the compilation of a seventeenth-century libretto was one of the easiest and most commonplace matters pertaining to the literature of that period. Aureli himself remarks:

I hope you will recognize, having regard to the pains I have taken with Ercole, the difference there is between writing in haste and composing with a mind at ease, and at one's leisure. I confess that, as to these (pains), I have exerted myself more than in my other Dramas to gratify your taste . . . I beg you to bear in mind, that there is no composition more difficult than that intended for the Stage.

The "composition" of a libretto was, therefore, considered such a difficult matter that one of the best librettists of the time (for such Aureli really was) could venture to say so without fear of incurring ridicule. And, nevertheless, such a difficult piece of writing received scant appreciation, if any; so scant, at any rate, that we must place some reliance on the sagacious sentence in which, shortly before, the poet declares that he is not writing "with ambition to immortalize himself in opera, which, being entirely set to music, has no other foundation than the air" (in the physical, not in the musical sense).

Hence, the libretto of the 'Fatiche d'Ercol per Deianira' is opulent in scenic show. And in any event, the exigence of the public with regard to staging and machines must have increased inordinately; for, in the libretto of 'Il Gran Macedone,' set to music by Boniventi and produced at the theatre of S. Cassiano in the year 1690, the poet (or rather the impresario), thinking that he had not sufficiently provided for the spectators in offering them eleven scenes in three acts and with three machines, considered it

expedient to excuse himself by printing, at the conclusion of the libretto (page 69), the following notice:

Most benevolent Reader. Should you observe that in the Opera, during one and the same Scene, like that of the ruins of the Galleries [*Loggie dirupate*], certain Personages appear more than once, we crave your indulgence, there being no device whereby the changes of Scene could be redoubled [sic!].

Matters had reached such a pass, then, that (the text is ambiguous and capable of various interpretations) with each change of scene not more than one person might enter, or that the same person might not enter more than once.

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In the libretti of that period we find many names interesting for the history of scenography, although they are far less numerous than we should expect. Indeed, it is a legend that the scenographer's name was not rarely mentioned in preference to the musician's. This happened only (seldom, even then) when the composer's name might naturally be omitted, seeing that everybody knew it (for instance, in 'Alessandro vincitor di sè stesso,' by Cavalli). In fact, the composer is named in but five out of twenty-six libretti relating to Cavalli, as catalogued by Wotquenne. The truth is, that the musician's name won lasting popularity through some song distinguished above the rest for its beauty and facility, and passed from mouth to mouth, so that there was no need of printing it; whereas it was proper that the scenographer, changing with each change of theatre, should be mentioned. And yet, after examining several hundred libretti of the seventeenth century, we can affirm that, except in a few isolated cases, the name of the scenographer is, as a rule, accompanied by that of the musician. Contrariwise, it very often happens that the musician, and not the scenographer, is named; and, for one case in which the musician is ignored, there are at least ten where the scenographer is left out. And, on the other hand, the dedications and prefaces were almost always written and signed by the librettists; and seventeenth-century litterati while generally recognizing the practical importance of scenography as a lure for the public, were not especially inclined—somewhat out of jealousy, somewhat from academic *morgue*—to recognize the esthetic value as an integral part of the melodrama, let alone the historical value. With the exception of a fugitive note by Marco da Gagliano<sup>1</sup> and a few others, and in

<sup>1</sup> A. Solerti, op. cit. p. 82.

the eighteenth century only by Arteaga and Planelli, by Martelli and Algarotti, do we find *la Prospettiva* (as the scenographic art was then called, in agreement with essayists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) definitely considered as an essential part of the melodrama. Innocent of ideologies, of romanticisms, of futile contempt for the art of the past, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* already stirs the intuition of Italians in the eighteenth century, and produces a Jomelli and a Gluck.

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Scenography assumes, therefore, a place of the highest importance in the history of opera, and more especially, it seems to us, in the seventeenth century; for during that period it passes from the fairly schematic simplicity of Alfonso and Giulio Parigi's Florentine scenes into the architectonic exuberance of Ferdinando Bibiena. But the history of seventeenth-century scenography is, unhappily, still to be written. In Italy we possess a good book on the history of scenography, which we owe to Professor G. Ferrari, himself a scenographer.<sup>1</sup> And this is the sole work of its kind now in existence, so far as I know. But it is singularly deficient in historical and bibliographical names and data concerning the scenography of the seventeenth century—a circumstance which need cause no surprise; for only a specialist in music-history and, furthermore, one who is not ill-informed in the history of painting, could carry out such an undertaking. We also have Wotquenne's catalogue of libretti, adorned with stage-scenes borrowed from the libretti. The material is valuable, but insufficient, because (for example) it does not include a single scene by Torelli or Domenico Mauro, nor does it illustrate the extraordinary architectonic fancy of Ferdinando Bibiena, of whom it is related that he exaggerated, in theatrical architecture, the baroque style of Borromini, the great emulator of Bernini. Moreover, Wotquenne frequently neglects to cite, in his catalogue, the names of the scenographers (for instance of "Fortune di Rodope e Damira," 1657; "Nerone," 1681; "Erismena," 1655; "Artaxerse," 1669; "Avvenimenti d'Orinda," 1659; "Coriolano," 1669; and many others), which shows that he did not attach too great importance to the scenographic portion of the libretti. And this finds confirmation in the fact that he always fails to record the Changes of Scene, which, on the contrary, are never omitted in the libretti.

<sup>1</sup> G. Ferrari, "La Scenografia. Cenni storici dall' evo classico ai nostri giorni." Milan, 1902.

Wishing to demonstrate the importance of seventeenth-century scenography, even from a strictly documentary point of view, I have carried out long and patient researches beginning, not with an examination of the libretti (which, in the Italian collections consulted by me, are very often minus illustrations), but with the material treasured in the collections of prints. I have scrutinized the prints relating to theatrical matters contained in the collections at Rome, Florence, Paris, London, in the Theatrical Museum at La Scala in Milan, and in the libraries of the Liceo Musicale of Bologna, the Conservatorio of Naples, of S. Cecilia and Casanatense. I have succeeded, frequently with much trouble, in identifying nearly all (I may say, practically all) the prints preserved in the above collections. I have also had the good fortune to discover much new material, and the pleasure of recognizing that this material, all deriving from the libretti of the epoch, is, though not very abundant, at least considerable. Excepting Burnacini *fils*, who can be studied only in Vienna, and the Bibienas, of whom, apparently, not many scenographic reproductions for use in libretti are extant,<sup>1</sup> this material is adequate to illustrate a history of scenography and scenographers in the seventeenth century. And, as I have indicated, the names of the scenographers can be gleaned, at least in part, from the libretti and also from short histories and local monographs of theatres, academies, etc. But this is not the time for drawing such a sketch, which I shall leave for subsequent publication.

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Before closing, however, one matter still remains to be explained, namely, the assertion (which many probably thought strange) that the favor enjoyed by the scenography of the seventeenth century resulted from a reaction against the academic and antiquarian type of the Florentine libretto *à la Rinuccini* or Salvatori. In point of fact, from about 1640 onward we find, in libretti like 'L'Ulisse Errante' by Badoaro, with music by Sacra (1644), or 'La Sincerità Trionfante' (1639) by Ottaviano Castelli, with music by Cecchini, dissertations against the Aristotelian laws and in favor of a liberty of imagination which strike us as an anachronism, although they are not an anachronism.

<sup>1</sup> The *scenari* of two operas were reproduced in rough cuts, with which Bibiena himself was dissatisfied, in a miscellanea, "Disegni delle scene che servano alle due opere che si rappresentano l'anno corrente nel Reggio Teatro di Torino, ecc." (date?) quoted by Ferrari, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Other poets, though protesting against the laws, still feel under the necessity of citing the authority of Spanish dramaturgists, or simply appeal to the "spirit of the times." Thus Busenello, in defiance of the Aristotelian law of the unity of time, declares shortly that he suits his own convenience:

This opera ('Didone,' 1641) is influenced by modern views. It is not made as the ancient rules prescribe, but according to Spanish usage; it represents years, not hours. He who writes, gratifies (his own) taste.

A Florentine would not have dared make this assertion; nor would he have confessed to Spanish influences—a circumstance which we consider highly important, and which has hitherto escaped the notice of historians. These poets discuss esthetics in such wise as their age permits, but—as may seem very strange to many—they eschew academics. Later, however, the discussions of the differences subsisting between libretto and tragedy will assume an academic aspect. And in so far the famous reform of Metastasio must be considered, from the standpoint of modern freedom, to be a retrogression, when confronted with this much-abused, and yet so free and brilliant, libretto of the seventeenth century. And, as already remarked, one need only read the lengthy preface (The Publisher to the Reader) of Ferrari's 'Andromeda' (that is to say, of the very first opera played before a paying audience) to comprehend that the Venetian melodrama instantly differentiated itself from the Florentine not merely, as has been incessantly repeated, from the day on which it possessed a libretto with an historic basis ('L'Incoronazione di Poppea,' set to music by Monteverdi), but rather from the day when it had, in 'Andromeda' (1637), a libretto in which the resources of scenography were given the most prominent place—far more than was the case with the *Intermedi* at the close of the sixteenth century and in the first decades of the seventeenth. Even in the music of 'Andromeda' one can perceive a sign of reaction against the excessive Hellenistic scruples of the Florentines. At the end of the first two acts they actually sung, not something in the shape of a monody, but "madrigals in several parts, concerted with various instruments." And the preface of 'Andromeda' is, at bottom, a long description of scenes and machines, interspersed with eulogies of the singers, all of whom are named, whereas (N.B.) the scenographer is not mentioned.<sup>1</sup> To tell the truth, the scenes changed only from

<sup>1</sup>I think I have identified him as Giovanni Burnacini.

*Boschereccia* to *Maritima* (woodland to maritime views), and *vice versa*; but the machines, and the flights of machines and personages, suffice to reveal the tendency underlying the development of the Venetian libretto. Though this libretto favored historical plots in the end, this was not at all due either to a stronger human interest on the part of artists or public, or (much less) to any historical instinct; which latter, as we might prove, was lacking in the Italian consciousness, and constituted (and still constitutes, to a great degree) the chief deficiency in the national life. History, or—to be more exact—the historical background of a fact, had the advantage, to be sure, of presenting names like Cæsar, Nero and Scipio, or regions (in the Orient, more particularly), which impressed the Venetian spectators as being closer to their life and therefore more intelligible than the gods of Olympus and the heroes of Greek mythology. But the principal advantage (one to which the historians' most careful consideration is invited) was the opportunity afforded for lavish display and, above all, a vast variety of scenographic tableaux, such as the world of mythology with its realms of Pluto, its feasts of the gods, its Ionic or Corinthian temples, and its Homeric duels, was quite incapable of presenting. The pictorial and plastic sense of the Italians, made keen by training, and finally excited and exacerbated by four centuries of uninterrupted florescence, as manifested by the numerous regional schools in all parts of Italy, had early discarded the too tenuous and colorless mythological world wherein, on the contrary, the Florentine melodrama had sought refuge to dream a life of Hellenistic illusions—a Calypso's grotto, as it were, of literature and culture. In its origin the melodrama is the fruit of a belated humanisticism, and likewise of a humanisticism having a musical character which is essentially anachronistic, because it occurs at the time when Italian musical culture, after Palestrina, was exhibiting signs of decadence. Hence, the study of and the love for the ancients, which have left so many traces on the plastic arts and the architecture of Italy, have had no important influence on what relates to the intrinsic substance of theatrical music.

Most profound differences subsist between the Greek tragedy and the Italian melodrama; and there is certainly no such ideal nexus as we find, for example, between antique sculpture or architecture and those of the Renaissance.

Monody, in my opinion, did not attain its highest expression in the melodrama, but in instrumental music, aided therein by that musical revolution which liberated the lower voices from polyphonic

subjection—Viadana's intuitive perception of the bass as an independent and continuous part, the so-called *basso continuo*. Possibly the *basso continuo* was of far greater importance than monody for the modern epoch. Indeed, we should reflect that monody, sooner or later, would inevitably have resulted from Viadana's innovation; whereas we never could have obtained the opposite result—the evolution, through the means of a free high voice (monody), of another free low voice.

Now, this observation substantiates the preceding one: because instrumental music is the flower of our civilization, it is precisely that which differentiates our epoch from the Hellenic epoch; it is the antithesis to the conception of art and of life which was held by the Greeks.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

# VOICE CULTURE PAST AND PRESENT

A GENERAL VIEW OF A PERPLEXING SUBJECT

By DAVID C. TAYLOR

## I

THERE are probably few fields of human endeavor in which so wide a diversity of both theory and practice is to be found as in the art of voice culture. People who take a serious interest in music are usually well aware of this fact. Indeed the tendency is rather to exaggerate the confusion than to recognize the fundamental points of agreement which all present theories and practices embody. Voice culture is looked upon by those acquainted with conditions from the outside as a sort of Donnybrook fair, in which everybody is at war with everybody else. But the state of affairs is not quite so hopelessly confused as that. Two or three main lines of thought are clearly defined. By separating these, and viewing each one in its relation to the others, a fairly clear idea of the whole complex subject is readily obtained.

To one who approaches the subject from the theoretical side, with no previous experience of actual singing, it seems at first beautifully simple and clear. A perusal of any standard work on vocal training gives the impression that there is a definite and well-established science of voice culture. A method of instruction in singing founded on scientific principles seems adapted to be readily grasped and applied without difficulty. Every authority on scientific voice culture describes the vocal organs as consisting of three parts—the breathing mechanism, the larynx, and the resonators. Each of these performs its particular function in the production of voice. The lungs furnish the motive power, by which the vocal cords are set in vibration. To determine the pitch of the tone, the vocal cords are brought to the proper degree of tension by the action of the laryngeal muscles. The tone thus produced is increased in power and modified in quality by the reinforcement of the resonating cavities—the chest, pharynx, mouth, and nasal passages.

This is all perfectly clear. So also is the next step which our supposed investigator makes in his study of his first selection

among the various vocal authorities. Each of the three parts of the vocal mechanism has one, and only one correct mode of operating. The lungs must be filled by a certain muscular action, and the expiration must be governed by the diaphragm and its assisting muscles in some particular way. In order to obtain the correct working of the vocal cords, the larynx must be held in some defined position; the cords themselves must vibrate in their whole length for the lower notes or chest register, must gradually shorten and at the same time increase their tension to ascend the scale in the medium register, and must vibrate only on their inner edges for the head voice. Further, the influence of the resonating cavities must be adapted to the tone. For the lowest notes of the voice the influence of the chest resonance must be most pronounced. To increase the power of the tone the mouth-pharynx cavity must be expanded so as to provide a greater reinforcing space. In order to secure the proper placement of the high notes, the nasal cavities must exert their influence in a marked degree.

A scientific method of voice culture would thus be found by our student of the subject to consist of a set of rules and directions for managing the three portions of the vocal mechanism. Everything would seem to be complete, with each principle resting on assured scientific facts. If he should decide to stop there he would be utterly unable to account for all the uncertainty and confusion of practical methods. Suppose him, however, to continue his theoretical studies, and to read all the standard works on vocal science. The second book he reads will surely contradict his first authority on some points. So with every succeeding author he consults, each one will be found to disagree to some extent with all the others. By the time he has finished with the entire list, he will be acquainted with four or five systems of breathing, with at least ten theories regarding laryngeal action and registers, and with an almost equal variety of doctrines concerning the management of the resonating cavities.

It might of course be possible for a patient investigator to weigh the scientific support given to each doctrine, and to decide which authority makes out the best case. Thus a set of principles might be established which could justly claim the adherence of all people of scientific mental habits. But even if this were done, our student would not by any means have cleared up all the difficulties of scientific voice culture. Only by actually training his own voice in the manner prescribed by his chosen authority could he come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the sufficiency of the method. To apply the doctrines which seem theoretically sound, and to see

how they work out in practice, that is the only way to determine their validity.

Very little time would be needed to reveal a wide gap between several of the theoretical doctrines and their practical application in vocal management. It would soon be found that knowing how the vocal organs should operate is one thing, and making them operate in this manner is something entirely different. In the matter of laryngeal action, for instance, no satisfactory connection between theory and practice has been made in any scientific method. All laryngoscopic observers of the vocal cord action are agreed on one point—that for the production of low notes the entire length of the cords is in vibration. But it is impossible for the singer consciously to make his vocal cords vibrate in any prescribed way, or even to know what they are doing. So also with regard to the influence of the resonating cavities, it is out of the singer's power to cause or to prevent reinforcing air vibrations.

Breathing is the only topic in which the scientific doctrine can be directly adopted into practice. A few days of practice will suffice for the mastery of any well authenticated system of breath management. But all the laws of laryngeal action and resonance have this in common, that they do not provide the means by which they can be applied in actual singing.

It is thus seen that a theoretical study of vocal science does not suffice to give a complete grasp of actual methods of instruction. Serious gaps are left between the scientific theories and their practical adaptation, and these gaps have had to be filled by the vocal teachers. It is a curious fact that the whole theoretical groundwork of modern voice culture has been laid by people who were neither singers nor musicians. They have considered their special work to consist only of formulating the laws of the vocal action. How these laws are to be utilized in the training of voices is a matter which the theorists have left entirely to the teachers of singing. Confusion is the inevitable result of this division of responsibility. The vocal teachers have striven to deduce materials of practical instruction from the scientific doctrines, but at the best they have succeeded only in hitting upon rather unsatisfactory makeshifts. There is really very little connection between the practical directions for management of vocal cord action and resonance, and the scientific theories of these actions. Yet the scope and purpose of actual instruction can only be grasped when the attempted connection of the theory with its application is understood. Every practical rule and direction which the vocal teacher gives to his pupils has reference to some one of

the three elements of tone production. A wide range is covered by instruction of this kind, but the subject need not be perplexing when the nature and function of the vocal organs are borne in mind.

Modern vocal methods conform as a rule to a fairly definite standard. Minor points of difference would no doubt be found between any two methods which might be examined. But the system now to be described may be taken as fairly representative of the course followed by the overwhelming majority of teachers, both in this country and in Europe.

Vocal training usually begins with instruction in the management of the breath. Breathing exercises are practised at first without tone, as simple gymnastics, in order that correct habits of breathing may be formed. Exercises in singing, designed to secure the correct breath management in the production of tone, follow in due course. These are combined with the first studies used to secure the proper vocal cord action. A rather indefinite form of instruction for this purpose is inevitable, in view of the fact that no direct conscious influence can possibly be brought to bear on the workings of the vocal cords. The preliminary exercises consist of the singing of single tones on the vowel *ah*; each tone is to be started with a clear attack, without scooping or slurring up to the note, no breath being allowed to escape before the start of the tone. A settled conviction of most vocal teachers is that a tone once started wrong cannot be made right.

When the vocal cord action in the medium register of the voice has been brought under control by the exercises just described, the lower and higher registers are developed, by practice on scales and arpeggios. To insure the proper action in these registers, care is taken to produce the correct quality of tone. The chest voice is full and round, the head voice light and brilliant. To blend the registers at the notes where they join, exercises in swelling the tone and in descending scale passages are most favored.

Several different forms of resonance are described by the theorists, and each of these receives separate attention from the teachers. For acquiring command of chest resonance the deeper vowels, *oh* and *oo*, are favored, single tone and descending scale exercises on these vowels being widely used for the purpose. Although chest resonance is held to be specially adapted to reinforcing the chest register, its influence is believed to be necessary for all powerful tones throughout the entire range of the voice.

To secure control of mouth-pharynx resonance *ah* is considered the best vowel, as it secures the position of the tongue and lips best adapted for the widest expansion of the cavity. Mouth-pharynx resonance favors especially the medium notes of the voice. To swell a single tone the cavity is increased in size by the gradual opening wider of the mouth and the sinking of the base of the tongue and the larynx. Another important feature of mouth-pharynx resonance is the securing of the proper placement of the tone in the front of the mouth. Certain consonants, notably *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, and *l*, are supposed to bring the tone forward into its proper position. Single tone exercises on syllables such as *pah*, *bah*, *tah*, etc., are used for this purpose.

Some authorities absolutely prohibit the use of nasal resonance, on the ground that it inevitably gives an unpleasant nasal sound or twang to the voice. To prevent this influence they declare that the soft palate should always be raised, so as to cut off the access of the tone to the nasal cavities. Nevertheless the overwhelming majority of vocal teachers are firm believers in nasal resonance. According to the generally accepted idea, the influence of the nasal cavities is necessary to give point, brilliance, and carrying power to the voice. The objectionable nasal tone is variously ascribed to the total absence of nasal resonance or to its excessive prominence.

The narrow vowels, especially *ee*, are held to be peculiarly adapted to acquire command of nasal resonance. So also are the nasal consonants, *m*, *n*, and *ng*. Exercises on the syllables *mee*, *nee*, etc., are generally used to this end. Nasal resonance finds its most important employment in the production of the high notes, the so-called head register, yet its influence is generally held desirable throughout the entire compass.

Much attention is paid to the sensations which the singer experiences in producing correct tones in the various parts of the voice. A chest tone properly sung conveys a feeling of vibration of the walls of the chest cavity. A tone which receives the proper influence of the mouth-pharynx resonance enables the singer to feel an expansion of this cavity. A tone placed in its forward position in the mouth should be felt to vibrate at the front teeth. In the same way, a vibration can be felt high up in the head when the tones receive the influence of nasal resonance in due measure. Advantage is taken of these characteristic sensations to enable the student to secure the proper action indicated in each case. In practising exercises designed to impart control of any element of correct tone production he is instructed to feel the appropriate

sensation, in the belief that this will induce the desired vocal action.

## II

Back of all the practices of vocal methods, back even of the theoretical groundwork of modern voice culture, lies a doctrine which requires to be brought out into the light and examined. Although obscure and in most cases only vaguely apprehended, this doctrine is the point from which the whole stream of present voice culture springs. It would indeed be more accurate to speak of a tacit assumption rather than of a doctrine, for the idea has never been expressly stated by any authority on scientific voice culture. Something is taken for granted in all theoretical study of the voice, as well as in all the practical instructions of vocal teachers. This is the assumption that the activities of the vocal organs require to be consciously guided and directed by the singer. It is everywhere assumed that the voice cannot operate correctly without intelligent direction and oversight. The correct use of the voice is believed to depend on the conscious management of the muscular actions of the vocal organs. Until quite recently this belief could be described as practically universal. It is not by any means confined to vocal teachers and students of singing. Almost everybody shares the idea that in order to sing artistically it is necessary for the singer to "do something" for the purpose of making the vocal organs act in the correct manner.

Most of the energies of teachers and students of singing are devoted to the quest of this "something," this way of inducing the vocal organs to act properly. Yet it is no injustice to the vocal teachers to say that they do not approach the problem of vocal management altogether in the scientific spirit. This could hardly be expected of them. A teacher of singing must first of all be a capable musician, and the scientific turn of mind is not fostered by musical education and environment. Vocal science is a highly specialized branch of technical knowledge. To approach it properly a student must be equipped with a thorough grounding in anatomy, acoustics, and mechanics. At least two years of special preparation in these sciences would be required to fit the average college graduate competently to undertake a solution of the vocal problem. A preliminary education of this kind cannot reasonably be expected of a vocalist.

Vocal teachers approach their problem from the practical side. Experience soon teaches them that technical facility in the use of the voice can be acquired in only one way—by daily practice

in singing scales, exercises, and vocalises. Another lesson of experience is that everything depends on how an exercise is sung—how the student handles his voice in practising. There is some one way of singing which is favorable to the development of the voice. Students who hit upon this manner of singing make steady progress, and have no difficulty in acquiring a perfect vocal technique. But there are a vast number of vocal students who experience great difficulty in finding out how to influence their voices in the correct way. Many unfortunate young people go on for month after month, studying and practising with all diligence, and yet finding that their voices do not progress at all.

This is the practical problem of voice culture, as it confronts the teacher of singing: How can the vocal organs be brought under the subjection of the will and made to act in the manner conducive to progress? For a solution of the problem they feel that they are limited to an application of the doctrines of vocal science. What they really desire is a means of inculcating a certain manner of singing—a mode of vocal utterance which experience has shown them to be correct. The only current conception of this manner of handling the voice is that it consists of some particular management of breath, laryngeal action, and resonance. But the insufficiency of the scientific method to instruct the student on the vital point of tone production is a matter of common knowledge. If the scientific doctrine were sound and its application complete, all voices should derive equal benefit from the system. But this is far from the case. Exactly the same course of instruction in breathing, register formation, and tone placement puts some voices in the position to profit by further technical study, and leaves others little better off than when they began. The vocal problem thus interposes itself as a barrier to the progress of countless ambitious students. No one questions that it must be solved along accepted lines, to this extent at any rate, that the student must learn consciously to direct the operations of his vocal organs.

A complete summary of modern vocal methods demands the mention of a number of systems which stand somewhat aloof from the main line of thought. The only orthodox system, the one sanctioned by the vocal scientists, is that described in our foregoing section. But outside this main group are a number of teachers, each one of whom has some specialty or panacea for bringing the voice into subjection. Their object is indeed that of the orthodox teachers, but they adopt peculiar, almost fantastic devices for the purpose. It would be impossible to enumerate all these systems, as every year brings forth new ones and witnesses the death of old ones.

In view of present conditions it is no wonder that the minds of vocalists are so frequently turned toward the old Italian method. During the life of the old system, roughly speaking from about 1600 to 1855, there was no uncertainty about vocal training. Students of singing entered on their studies with the same prospects of acquiring command of their voices as students of the piano and violin have of mastering their chosen instrument. Provided the necessary talent and industry were applied, progress was steady and uninterrupted, and ultimate technical mastery of the voice was assured.

That many modern teachers claim to follow the old Italian system need not be thought to confuse the present situation still further. This claim is in most cases unfounded. Any teacher whose method deals with breathing, tone placement, the singer's sensations, the expansion of the throat, etc., does not represent the old school. So long as there is any idea, even unexpressed, of consciously influencing the actions of the vocal organs, the spirit of the modern system is evinced.

Many attempts have been made to reconstruct the old system, and to find out in particular what means it used for imparting the correct management of the vocal organs. But almost every investigator of the subject has started with the preconceived belief in the necessity of conscious management of the vocal activities. Nothing has resulted beyond various theories that the old masters advocated some particular type of breathing, register formation, or tone placement. So firmly is the scientific idea established that no one has thought to find in the old method anything but a set of rules for the control of the mechanical operations of the voice. Only one conclusion can be reached by investigation along this line. It would have to be admitted that the old masters knew more about the science of voice production than we do. But this is utterly at variance with the facts. Almost nothing of a scientific character was known about the vocal mechanism until the invention of the laryngoscope in 1855. The old masters did not even know that the voice is produced by the pressure of the expired breath setting the vocal cords in vibration. Scientific principles could not have formed the basis of the old method.

Yet the fact remains that the old masters had some way of imparting the correct use of the voice, superior to the devices contained in modern methods. There is, however, nothing to prove that they considered vocal management the most important topic of instruction in singing. On the contrary, a study of the few books written by masters of the old school might lead

to the conclusion that they simply relied on some natural facility which the voice possesses to guide it in the right path. Not only did they ignore the scientific principles of voice production—they even went further than this, and failed to recognize any necessity for the conscious management of the voice's activities.

On one aspect of this subject all investigators of the old system are in substantial agreement. There is no question that the old masters based their course of instruction on the natural use of the voice. They built up on that, and led from natural singing to the perfect technical command of all the vocal resources. The desire to sing is not an artificial acquirement, like the taste for olives or tobacco. Everybody who possesses a good voice and a musical ear loves to sing. Children in particular are forced by their very instincts to find a pleasure in singing. They never think of the voice as a musical instrument, composed of an air chamber, a pair of vibrating reeds, and a resonating apparatus. Theirs is a purely natural form of singing, prompted by their instincts and emotions, and giving them a spontaneous and unreasoned pleasure. Before starting on a course of vocal cultivation, every student without exception has been in the habit of singing in this natural manner throughout his whole previous life. It was this form of singing which the old masters took as their starting-point in vocal training. The modern idea is to discard natural singing as inherently incorrect, and to substitute for it an artificial manner of managing the vocal organs. This is the direct opposite of the old system, which followed the plan of refining and developing the natural manner of singing.

Modern voice culture takes almost no account of any natural provision for the vocal organs. Yet it is obvious that the use of the voice is a purely natural function. Nature's plan of vocal control is worthy of consideration, even if it do no more than suggest a possible interpretation of the old Italian method. It may be found that the natural form of vocal control contains everything necessary for the purposes of artistic vocal cultivation. In that case there would be a strong presumption in favor of the belief that this manner of vocal management was the foundation of the old Italian system.

Nature's provision for the guidance of the singer's vocal organs is the singer's own ear. This is a fact of such obvious truth that its bearing on the scheme of voice culture may easily be overlooked. Yet its significance is at once apparent, when the extent of the ear's control over the voice is seen. Let the reader strike a note on the piano, and then sing a tone of the same pitch.

He will see that the vocal organs respond instantly to the demand of the ear for a tone of a certain pitch. No thought whatever is required, no knowledge even that the pitch is determined by the degree of tension of the vocal cords. A few tones might be sung on various vowels, *ah*, *ee*, *oh*, etc., and the same instantaneous response of the voice to the ear will be seen. Any desired quality of tone can be produced in the same direct way, without thought of the vocal mechanism or its operations. We can sing tones expressive of joy or of sorrow, harsh tones or tones of beautiful quality, loud tones or soft, just as we will. In every case the ear directs and the voice obeys automatically.

This is Nature's mode of vocal guidance. It has of course its physical basis, although we cannot be conscious of what takes place. There is in the brain a connection between the cells which receive impressions of sound from the ear and those which direct the muscular operations of the vocal organs. A sound may be heard and reproduced by the voice at once, or it may be stored up in the memory and produced at some later time. In either case the imaginative function of the sense of hearing serves as the medium in transmitting to the vocal organs the demands of the will. It need hardly be said that we can summon up in imagination any sound with which we are familiar. What may be called the mental ear is the monitor which Nature has given us for the guidance of the voice.

For the production of vocal tones of any kind, the desired sounds are first conceived in the mind; a message is instantly carried from the brain to the muscles of the vocal organs, instructing them what movements are necessary to produce the tones demanded by the ear. There is an instinct by which the muscles concerned in voice production are guided, but this instinct is too mysterious for us to fathom. An equally mysterious process is involved in the muscular adjustments of the eyes. Indeed for fineness in degree of contraction the tiny muscles of the vocal cords are equalled only by the muscles which focus the eyes and contract and dilate the iris. It is of no importance to the singer that the instinct by which the muscular operations of his voice are guided is beyond his knowledge and control. We do not even know, except in very broad outline, what takes place in the larynx. But we do know that Nature has provided us with an instinct through which the vocal organs are enabled to respond directly to the demands of the ear, and that is sufficient for us.

This is the psychological law of vocal management. In its practical bearing on the training of the voice it is really of vastly

more importance than the physiological and acoustic laws of the vocal action. Why the psychological principle of the voice should have been so completely ignored by the vocal scientists is easily seen. Scientific investigation has been carried on only by throat specialists and acousticians. Each one has been concerned only with his own specialty, and the psychological laws of muscular control have lain outside their province.

There is of course nothing new about the guidance of the voice by the ear. Children have always learned to talk in this instinctive manner. Our tendency in childhood to imitate with our voices all the sounds we hear is a matter of common observation. Vocal imitation depends absolutely on the instinctive connection between the voice and the ear.

All the information available tends to support the opinion that the old masters relied on purely instinctive processes for their scheme of vocal management. This was not, however, a course arrived at by reason or philosophy. That the voice responds to the demands of the ear was to them too simple and obvious a matter to call for analysis. They never thought of questioning the ability of the vocal organs to meet any demands imposed on them by the ear. To us, brought up in the belief in the necessity of conscious vocal management, it would seem, at first thought, impossible to train the voice along instinctive lines. But there is every reason to believe that the old masters would have been equally puzzled by our modern doctrine. Why attempt to supplant or even to assist Nature, when she is fully capable of managing the voice in her own way? Instead of trying to strike out a new path, the old masters seem simply to have followed the lines laid down by Nature. They based their method on the instinctive action of the vocal organs.

### III

Modern authorities on the voice devote their attention almost exclusively to the anatomy of the vocal organs, and to the acoustic laws bearing on their operations. A study of the most highly considered works on vocal science would tend to give the impression that nothing else can possibly be known about the voice. As the old masters were utterly ignorant of vocal science, it might be thought that they knew nothing at all about the nature of the vocal instrument. This is, however, far from the truth. The old masters possessed a wealth of information about the voice which had nothing to do with its muscular or acoustic aspects.

In the first place, the masters of the old school had a definite standard as to what constitutes correct tone production. According to the modern idea, a voice is properly produced when the breath is managed in a certain way, the tones are reflected at the right point in the mouth, etc. The old masters judged the correctness of a voice's production solely by the sound of the tones it produced. A certain type of vocal tone impresses the keen and cultivated ear as correct. Tones which differ from this type are heard to be incorrect. Every lover of good singing is probably aware of this fact. One need not be a singer or a vocal teacher in order to judge voices as the old masters did. Vocal correctness can be determined by esthetic considerations fully as well as by scientific formulae.

A well-known peculiarity of the voice is that its tones always convey to the listener an impression of the condition of the singer's throat in producing them. Darwin has remarked that, when a public speaker or singer suddenly becomes a little hoarse, many of those present may be heard to clear their throats. Consider the coarse, harsh voice of the average minor vaudeville singer. While listening to it we feel that the unfortunate singer's throat is painfully strained and pinched; we even feel a sympathetic pain in our own throats. A disagreeably nasal voice is felt by the hearer to pass through the singer's nose, instead of issuing freely from the mouth. The throaty voice gives the impression of a tightness or constriction at the back of the throat. All these impressions are purely auditory; they are conveyed by something in the sound of the tones, and are not dependent on any scientific knowledge of the voice on the part of the hearer.

Every voice which conveys the idea of muscular tension or constriction is felt by the sensitive hearer to be wrongly produced. No technical knowledge of singing is involved in this estimation of voices. But to apply these judgments in the training of voices an intimate acquaintance with every conceivable variety of vocal tone is demanded. Such an acquaintance can be acquired only by the observation of a vast number of singers. Through an experience of this kind the ear becomes extremely keen and sensitive, able to detect the slightest trace of tension or strain revealed by a voice.

A correctly used voice makes exactly the opposite impression on the ear. Instead of tension and stiffness, it imparts a sense of muscular freedom, poise and well-being. The singer's throat seems to be comfortably free and open, and the tones issue forth without obstruction or difficulty. There is a satisfaction derived

from listening to singing of this kind, added to and independent of the esthetic pleasure of hearing beautiful sounds. This was the principle of correct tone production, as the subject was considered by the old masters. A correctly used voice comes out freely and clearly, without conveying any sense of muscular stiffness or tension. Any impression of strain made by a voice, no matter how slight, is an indication of faulty vocal management.

Closely identified with this standard of vocal correctness is the purely musical and esthetic aspect of vocal tone. A voice marred by throat tension is not as beautiful as it would be if properly produced. Every impression of muscular strain is a blemish on the musical beauty of the tones. It is impossible for any one endowed with a naturally beautiful voice to produce harsh tones without straining the muscles of the throat. This fact was well known to the old masters. Their doctrine was that beautiful tones are beneficial to the voice, and harsh sounds injurious. Vocal strain cannot fail to work injury to the delicate muscles of the larynx.

Voices were never ruined under the old system of cultivation. The masters were keenly sensitive to every indication of vocal strain. They corrected faults of production from the very beginning of instruction, and never permitted their pupils to sing harsh or unmusical tones. Beauty of sound was always their guiding principle, and by adhering to it they avoided all danger of injuring their pupils' voices.

In the singing of beautiful tones the voice finds its normal and healthful exercise. The muscles of the larynx are strengthened, and they acquire facility in responding smoothly to the demands of the ear. To sing beautifully is not in any sense opposed to the natural instincts of the voice. On the contrary, the desire to produce beautiful tones is just as much a matter of instinct as the impulse to sing at all. Everybody who feels impelled to sing, be he cultured or the reverse, strives unconsciously to make his voice sound as fine as he can. Why, then, it may be asked, is there any need of special vocal cultivation? If every singer has the natural impulse to sing beautifully, and beautiful tones are all that is needed to train the voice, why do not all singers use their voices correctly?

These questions lead at once to the consideration of another principle of the old masters. Their doctrine was that the training of the ear is of fully as much importance in the singer's education as the training of the voice. As the vocal organs depend for guidance on the ear, they cannot well produce a better type of tone

than the ear demands. Close attention to the sounds of voices, continued over a period of many months, is needed for the ear to become familiar with the standards of perfect singing. Ear training and vocal cultivation went hand in hand. In his daily practising the student strove, through repeated singing of the same passages, to bring his voice into conformity with his mental conception. The purpose of vocal practice was to give facility to the voice in producing the tones called for by the ear. Week by week the student's ear became better acquainted with the ideal of pure vocal tone, and his mental standard of correct singing was thus constantly advanced. A remarkable keenness in the perception of musical tone qualities was required in the old system of vocal training. Even to sing in tune calls for a well-trained ear.

A slight blemish in a tone, which would pass unnoticed by the average musician, is enough to inform a singer trained in the old system of some fault in the production of the voice. The old masters knew that faults allowed to pass uncorrected have a tendency to become fixed habits, and to grow ever more pronounced. Another aspect of ear training is seen here. A vocal student is at a certain disadvantage in listening to himself. For one thing, he is so accustomed to the sound of his own voice that its most striking characteristics may easily escape his notice. Further, the sounds of the voice are conveyed to the ear by the vibrations of the bones of the head, as well as by the sound waves of the exterior air. On this account the old masters always cautioned their students to listen critically to the voice as it comes to the outer ear, so that their voices might sound to themselves exactly as they did to other listeners. This is by no means an easy matter, and much care and attention are demanded before the ability can be acquired.

To acquaint their pupils with the correct standards of singing the old masters had a beautifully clear and simple plan. At each lesson the master sang for the pupil's guidance a few measures of every exercise he was called on to practise. Each exercise and vocalise was adapted to the student's stage of progress, with regard to both his vocal ability and the advancement of his sense of hearing. He was never allowed to sing anything which taxed his voice, or exceeded his musical and artistic capacity. The course of instruction was designed to afford equal advancement to both voice and ear.

In the correction of faults of vocal production the old method was equally simple and direct. When a pupil sang incorrectly, the master imitated his tones, in order that he might hear how they

sounded. Then the master sang the passage correctly, for the student to know how it should sound. Nothing more than this was ever done for the correction of faults. Compared with the elaborate explanations demanded for the correction of nasal and throaty emission in scientific instruction, the scheme of the old masters seems too simple to be effective. Yet the evidence that it was effective cannot be disputed.

Another important feature of the old masters' knowledge of the voice was their understanding of the advantageous use of vocalises. There is a certain type of melody which the voice sings easily, and in which its tones show off to the best effect. Daily practice in singing melodies of this type is the most beneficial exercise possible for the voice. Only a trained singer can compose this class of melodies; indeed one must be a trained singer to be able to tell whether any particular melody is adapted to the purposes of vocal cultivation. During the first hundred and fifty years of the old Italian school the masters were almost without exception both composers and cultivated singers. They wrote exercises and vocalises specially for each individual student, adapting the passages composed for each lesson to the pupil's stage of advancement. This custom gradually died out toward the end of the 18th century, but by that time an abundance of collections of vocalises had been published. The later teachers of the old school drew on works of this kind for their materials of instruction, without departing otherwise from the system of their predecessors.

All the vocalises and exercises used in the old school were melodies of the type which favors the voice. A striking feature of them, to which the old masters paid the greatest attention, was that they were always carefully graded so as to meet the needs of the advancing student. Here we meet yet another principle of the old method. Mastery of a simple study enables the voice to sing with facility one slightly more difficult. Practice of this second exercise enables the voice to advance to another of yet greater difficulty. A course of vocalises can thus be arranged by a judicious teacher, so that the student is led gradually to the mastery of the most elaborate technical studies. The standard works of vocalises published by the masters of the old school were always graded in this manner.

That one particular manner of singing favors the progress and development of the voice was recognized by the old masters, fully as well as by modern teachers. But their conception of the means needed to secure correct tone production was entirely different from that which now prevails. They held that the voice

falls naturally into the correct way of operating. Nothing was demanded of the student but a clear mental conception of the type of tones to be sung, combined with an ear keen enough for him to judge his own voice justly. So far as vocal management was concerned, the teacher's province was simply to set the model of perfect tone for the pupil's imitation, and to correct any tendency toward faulty production.

Under the modern idea the main purpose of every study is to enable the student to bring the will power to bear directly on the mechanical operations of the vocal organs. There is no time at which the attention of both teacher and pupil is not turned, in part at least, to the workings of the pupil's throat and his management of the breath. In the older system nothing of the kind was ever thought of. Attention was devoted solely to the musical and esthetic aspects of the pupil's singing. Pure and beautiful tone was the one criterion of correctness. This was aimed at directly, and the vocal action by which it was attained was of no interest.

#### IV

Of the many puzzling questions presented by the history of voice culture none is more baffling than the reason for the abandonment of the old Italian method. There never was any complaint with the results of vocal instruction under the old system. Teachers, students, and singers all had abundant reason to be satisfied. No necessity for reform or even improvement was felt by the members of the vocal profession. Yet the project of reform was launched, and the vocalists were obliged to fall into line with it.

Manuel Garcia, the inventor of the laryngoscope, is looked upon generally as the leader in the modern reformation of voice culture. Garcia was a vocal teacher, and not in any sense a specialist in scientific investigation. What he contributed was a little mirror by which the vocal cords can be seen in action. It was the throat specialists who took up the task of investigating the laryngeal action, and of establishing the laws to which vocal methods should accord. Garcia continued to teach singing almost up to the close of his hundred years of life, and he never departed from the old Italian method in which he had been trained. In his earlier years his ambition was to place the traditional method on a scientific basis. But he never countenanced the utter repudiation of the old system. The abandonment of the Italian method resulted from the labors of a large number of throat specialists

and acousticians. No one of these scientists knew anything about the voice from personal experience of either singing or teaching.

Outside pressure was brought to bear on the vocal teachers. The general public was profoundly impressed by the discoveries of the vocal scientists, and demanded that the new learning be incorporated in vocal methods. There was nothing in the philosophic basis of the old method which its exponents could oppose to the new doctrine. Indeed, the masters of the old school were musicians, not philosophers or scientists. They were not even aware that their system had a sound philosophic basis. So they yielded the ground without a contest. Instead of opposing the new idea, they accepted it without question, and did the best they could to adapt their methods to it.

About forty years were required to effect the revolution of vocal methods. A feeling of unrest began to be noticeable about 1830. With the invention of the laryngoscope the new idea received a remarkable impetus. The most influential works in disseminating the scientific point of view were: Helmholtz' "Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen" (1862), which established the acoustic laws of voice production; Merkel's "Der Kehlkopf" (1873), containing an exhaustive description of the larynx and its activities; and Mandl's "Die Gesundheitslehre der Stimme" (1876), in which the laws of breathing and breath control found their first complete expression. Most important of all, the belief in the absolute necessity of intelligent management of the vocal organs did not attain to universal acceptance until about 1870. The last exponents of the old method were Lamperti, who retired from active teaching in 1876, and Garcia, whose activities did not cease entirely until his death in 1905. Their influence, however, did not suffice to change the general trend of thought. Since the date mentioned the modern idea has been practically unopposed.

Modern methods of voice culture divide the training of the voice into two parts—the acquirement of correct vocal management, and the technical training of the voice strictly speaking. The description of scientific methods contained in our first section refers only to the first stage of instruction, for it is here alone that vocal science has found its province. In its subsequent stage the modern system differs in only one important respect from the older method. Exactly the same vocalises and exercises are used which formed the working materials of the old masters. These are taken up in the same sequence, and practised for the same purpose. But the influence of the doctrine of direct control is extended even

to the second stage of present instruction. The supposed necessity of consciously guiding the vocal organs is never lost to view.

This is in one sense inconsistent with the theory of scientific instruction. When the voice has been "placed" by the preliminary course in tone production, it should act automatically in the correct manner. From that time on the esthetic desire is supposed to dominate the student's activities; the technical training of the voice is then to be begun on the basis of artificially acquired habits, exactly where the old masters began with the natural use of the voice. But the theory seldom works out in practice. Voice-placing work of the scientific type is almost exclusively mechanical in its nature. It does not lead to spontaneous singing. When the habit of thinking constantly of the vocal organs has once been formed, it is extremely difficult for the student to change his mental attitude. An unconscious check is thus imposed on the normal impulse to sing freely and spontaneously. In the older system the value of daily exercise of the voice in the singing of vocalises hinged on the instinctive influence which the esthetic sensibility unconsciously exerts over the vocal organs. This influence is weakened, sometimes indeed completely impaired, when the attention is turned even partially to the mechanical features of tone production.

A sharp contrast can now be drawn between the old and the new system. One treated vocal cultivation as a branch of strictly musical education, the other makes it rather a system of throat gymnastics. One drew its inspiration from Nature, the other ignores Nature and turns to artifice. One appealed to musical instinct and esthetic feeling, the other places its reliance on purely physical observations of muscular movements and sensations.

It is a matter of common knowledge that conditions in the field of voice culture are far from satisfactory. How the situation can be improved is a very live question. Judged solely by its results, in comparison with those obtained under the older method, the present system is open to serious criticism. On theoretical grounds also this criticism can be well justified. There are two weak points in the scientific system. For one thing it sets out to do something which is already done by Nature in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. It has never been shown that any improvement on the natural manner of handling the voice is demanded. The very possibility of doing better than Nature in this regard has not been established. And in the second place, even if the conscious management of the voice were both possible and necessary, vocal science in its present state does not meet the requirement. This weakness was pointed out in our first section. No way has yet been

devised by which the singer can bring his intellect to bear directly on the operations of his vocal organs. Vocal cord adjustment in particular, the crux of the whole matter from the scientific point of view, results from muscular operations which, so far as our present knowledge goes, are entirely beyond the direct influence of the will power.

It is hardly conceivable that the present chaotic condition of voice culture should continue indefinitely. A change of some kind is inevitable. If progress along scientific lines is to lead to a satisfactory outcome, it will probably take the direction indicated by its present deficiency. Scientific investigators will concern themselves with the practical application of their doctrines, instead of placing this responsibility on the vocal teachers. Then again, there is a possibility that the entire edifice of vocal science will ultimately be abandoned. Even now the beginnings of a movement of this kind among the vocal teachers can be discerned. The demand for a revival of the old Italian method will take on a new force when its principles are once definitely established.

But so sweeping a counter-revolution as that is hardly to be expected. Much valuable information has been brought to light by the scientific investigation of the past sixty years. Voice culture will without doubt be the richer for this new knowledge, so soon as it is digested and brought into form available for practical use. Some way may be found for utilizing scientific knowledge, without involving the conscious direction of the vocal organs. A combination of the two systems, scientific and instinctive, may then be found to contain the most hopeful elements of a happy solution. When that has been reached we may be justified in the expectation that the old glories of the art of bel canto will be revived, and that methods of instruction will rival and even surpass the system of the old masters.



